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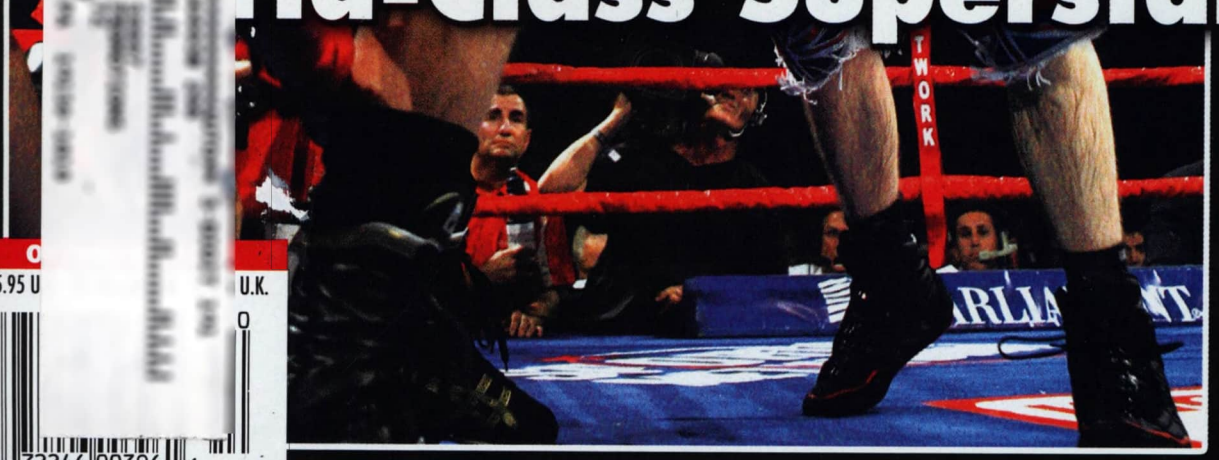

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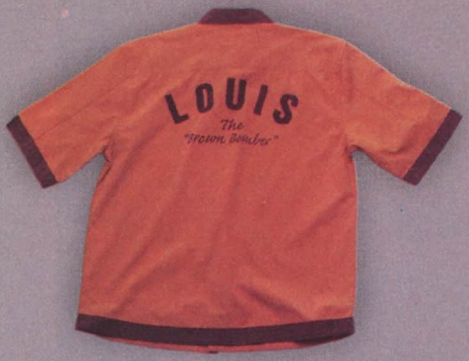

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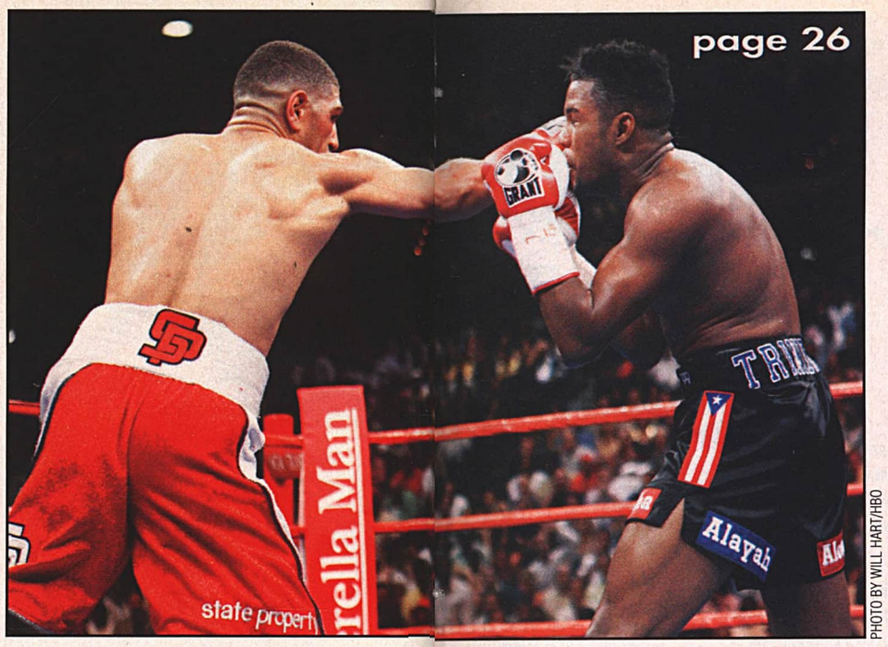

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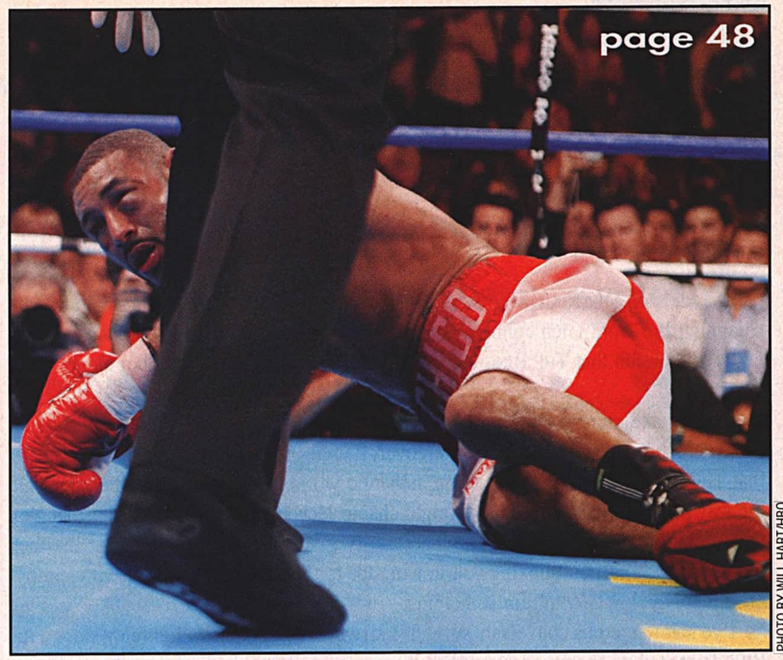

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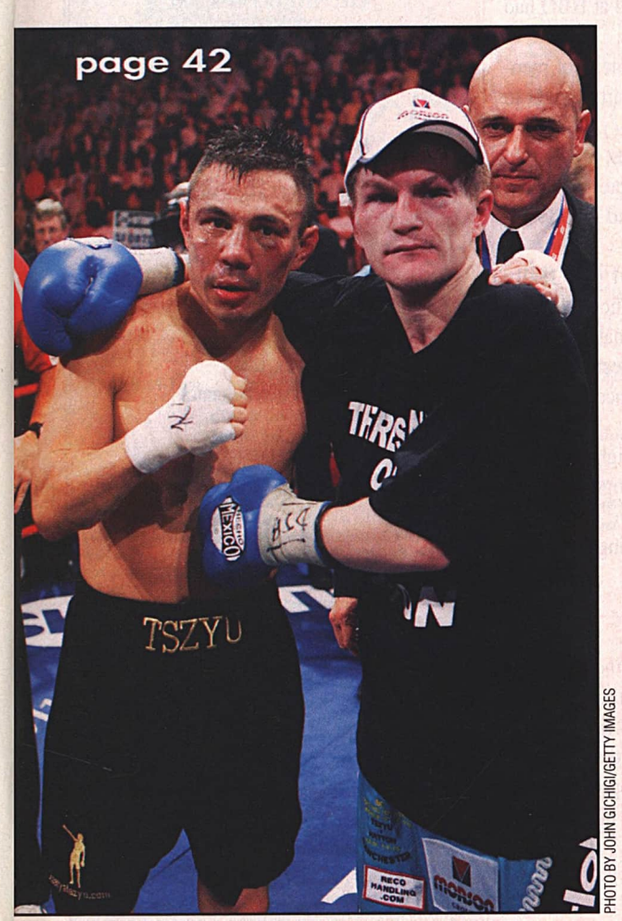

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RINGSIDE

Readers of THE RING who watched Antonio Tarver regain the light heavyweight championship from Glen Johnson may have wondered why HBO's broadcast crew failed to mention that THE RING belt was on the line. If so, they were not alone; I too was puzzled.

Even worse, during the broadcast it was stated that "no meaningful belt" was at stake, which was a real low blow. Moreover, it didn't make sense when one considers that THE RING's tradition of awarding authentic world champions with a belt goes all the way back to 1922, when heavyweight champ Jack Dempsey received the first. Not that sticking around all those years necessarily gives the belt credence, but the fact that is the most difficult boxing belt to win, due to the stringent nature of our championship policy, has to count for something.

I've had numerous conversations with Larry Merchant and Jim Lampley since THE RING launched its championship policy three years ago, and both of them have always indicated that they wholeheartedly approve of our attempt to restore integrity to championship boxing. But so far, despite a few oblique references, they have never truly endorsed the policy during a broadcast.

I spoke with Lampley again a few days after the Tarver-Johnson fight. One of the things I wanted to know was if anybody higher up the chain of command at HBO had told him not to talk about THE RING's championship policy.

"No," Lampley replied in an emphatic manner. "I'm the one to blame. Not mentioning that THE RING belt was at stake was a scandalous failure on my part. I ought to do better. You have every right to be furious."

Well, maybe, but going ballistic seldom solves anything, and besides, how could you be angry with Lampley after such a forthright admission. We all screw up from time to time. Next, I spoke with Larry Merchant, who also apologized and said he felt that what THE RING was trying to achieve is a "noble goal."

While it's gratifying to have Merchant and Lampley's approval, if they really believe what they say, it is time to support THE RING championship policy publicly. Instances such as Tarver-Johnson I & II, when fighters give up their alphabet titles in order to make the sort of matches boxing consumers want to see, are perfect occasions to recognize THE RING's efforts to counter the alphabet organization's cancerous interference with the Sweet Science.

HBO missed a significant opportunity to help move the sport in the right direction during the broadcast of the Tarver-Johnson rematch by failing to recognize a key ally's effort to advance the cause. Hopefully, Lamps and Larry will live up to their word and do better in the future. Because if we are going to have a fighting chance of making boxing all that it can be, the good guys have to pull together.

***

Speaking of good guys, I'd like to thank Manny Pacquiao for taking the appropriate action and relinquishing his RING featherweight title, which he did in writing during the early part of June. Pacquiao, who will now campaign as a junior lightweight, was aware that THE RING does not strip champions of belts won inside the ring, and could have procrastinated. But that might have denied other fighters the opportunity to vie for the now-vacant belt. Like most fighters, Pacquiao is an honorable man and did the right thing. That's the way boxing is supposed to work.

Nigel Collins
Editor-in-Chief

Volume 84, No. 9 **October 2005**

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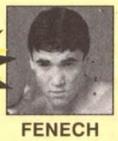

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★ Sir Henry Cooper
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ROUND ONE

ANOTHER MEMORABLE WEEKEND IN CANASTOTA

Despite humid weather and rain during the induction speeches, the 16th annual induction at the International Boxing Hall of Fame was the latest in a series of highly successful events held in the tiny upstate New York community of Canastota. Each year the crowd grows larger as more people learn how special the three-day weekend is for fighters and fans alike.

Heading the Class of 2005 were Barry McGuigan, Terry Norris, and Bobby Chacon, a trio of living inductees who were elected in the "Modern" category. Italy's Duilio Loi was also inducted in this group, but was unable to attend as he is suffering from Alzheimer's disease. He was represented by his daughter Bonario.

Both McGuigan and Norris choked back tears as they were presented with their Hall of Fame rings. Chacon, on the other hand, wore a beaming smile all weekend and even sang and danced alongside John H. Stracey, who performed songs from his CD during the opening ceremony.

Former WBA featherweight titleholder McGuigan was accompanied by his family and his friend, actor Daniel Day Lewis, whom he trained for his role in the movie *The Boxer*. McGuigan also found time to work the pads with son Shane, who attends college in Florida, during a public workout.

Other living inductees on hand for the festivities were matchmaker Don Fraser, who went into the "Non-Participant" category, and writer/historian Bert Randolph Sugar, who was voted into the "Observers" category.

Many of the deceased inductees were represented by family members. Brian Cayton, the son of the late manager and film collector Bill Cayton, read a letter his father had received from Muhammad Ali on his 75th birthday. Jessie Mullan was on hand to accept on behalf of her husband, Harry, the former editor of the British weekly *Boxing News*.

Other posthumously inductees included boxers Eugene Criqui, Joe Lynch, Marcel Thil, and Charles "Bud" Taylor (in the Old-Timers category); manager/promoter Lope Sarreal ("Non-Participant") and writer/ publicist Jersey Jones ("Observer").

Past inductees in attendance included Aaron Pryor, Ken Buchanan, Ken Norton, Alexis Arguello, Emile Griffith, and Carmen Basilio, who celebrated the 50th anniversary of his title-winning victory over Tony DeMarco. Griffith was wildly popular with the fans, due no doubt to the resurgence of interest in the former welter and middleweight champion generated by the TV documentary *Ring Of Fire*, which detailed his tragic 1962 fight with Benny "Kid" Paret and its aftermath. Ironically, at the induction ceremony, Griffith sat next to Alan Minter, the man who beat him in Griffith's final pro bout.

Active fighters in town for the three-day event included lightweight champion Diego Corrales, Shane Mosley, Juan Diaz, Lamon Brewster, and Christy Martin, who worked out in public for her upcoming bout with Lucia Rijker.

As is always the case during induction weekend, the fighters and the fans intermingled freely, and at Graziano's Motel and Restaurant, across the street from the Hall grounds, Marvelous Marvin Hagler could be seen knocking back drinks with Michael Carbajal. It's the sort of thing you only see in Canastota—and only on induction weekend.

—Tris Dixon

PHOTO BY PAT ORR

New inductees Sugar, Fraser, Chacon, Norris, and McGuigan show off their rings

LOOK OUT, LAILA!

Tiger Woods may have started his golf career in early childhood, but he's got nothing on Baltimore boxer Mia Ellis.

Five-year-old Mia has been boxing since she was six months old, when she put socks on her hands and pretended they were gloves. Under the tutelage of her father, Kenny Ellis, who trains both amateur and professional fighters at Upton Boxing Club on Baltimore's rough-and-tumble west side, Mia has progressed at a rapid pace.

PHOTO BY MIKE GREENHILL

Mia (left) spars with seven-year-old Quad Allison as her father supervises

"I didn't even have to push her into it," said her father. "She asked me if she could box."

Mia, nicknamed "Killer Bee," has shown a mental aptitude for the sport as well as physical.

"We were watching the fights one time on television when she was two years old, and during the fight she said to me, 'Daddy, he's not jabbing enough,' I thought, *Whoa, where did that come from?*"

In the morning, little Mia will wait at her parents' bedside holding boxing equipment, hoping to train before school.

"When I tell her we have to do it after school, she said, 'No, Daddy, by then it'll be too late!' She gets upset if she goes two days without training."

Mia goes through the full workout: shadow boxing, hitting the mitts, calisthenics, sparring, hitting the heavybag and speedbag. Mia has the full support of her father and mother, Matheia. Even Mia's kindergarten teacher approves of the activity. An independent filmmaker is doing a documentary on the whiz kid, hoping to show it at upcoming independent film festivals upon completion.

With skills and poise way beyond her years, there appears little doubt that Mia Ellis will compete as an amateur as soon as she reaches an eligible age. And before we know it, the "Killer Bee" will be stinging.

—Mike Greenhill

CHAMP CHANEY, 1924-2005

His given name was Colion Chaney, but everybody called him "Champ," even though he never won a major boxing title. Still, if one can be a champion at life, Chaney, who died at the age of 81 on May 19, surely qualified.

Born one of 18 children in Commerce, Georgia, Chaney moved to Indianapolis, Indiana, in 1943 and turned pro in Columbus, Ohio, in August of that year, boxing a six-round draw with Al Sheridan. Chaney, who learned to box during a stint with the Civilian Conservation Corps during the Depression, fought professionally as both a heavyweight and light heavyweight for the next 10 years, ending his career in 1953 with a 56-27-6 (25) record.

It was, however, as a trainer that Chaney had the greatest impact. While working as a member of the Indianapolis Police Department, he trained young boxers at the local Police Athletic League and had a profound influence on many of his pupils.

"I think Champ alone was responsible for keeping huge amounts of crime off the street," said IPC colleague Michael Price. "He was the most caring individual I ever met."

One of the young men Chaney took under his wing was Marvin Johnson, who would go on to win both the WBC and WBA light heavyweight titles with Chaney in his corner.

J Russell Peltz, who promoted Johnson, found out how important Chaney was to Johnson's success when he tried to replace him with another trainer.

"I tried other trainers, but it never really worked," said Peltz. "Then Joe Gramby (an old-school Philadelphia manager) explained to me that when the bond between fighter and trainer is as strong as the one Marvin and Champ had, it wouldn't matter if I bought in Ray Arcel, it would still hurt the fighter. So he stuck by Champ, and guess what? He didn't do so bad."

Not that Chaney would have cared what Peltz thought. His goal went beyond winning fights.

Chaney embraces Johnson after kayo of Victor Galindez in 1979

"My concern hasn't been to make great fighters," said Chaney. "My concern is to make good citizens."

—Nigel Collins

TV FIGHTS OF THE MONTH

DATE	WINNER/LOSER	NETWORK	DIVISION	SIGNIFICANCE	MATCHUP	RESULT
4/29/05	Samuel Peter KO 3 Gilbert Martinez	ESPN2	h	B-	D+	C
Peter raised expectations the last two times out, so no, this wasn't particularly impressive						
4/29/05	Oscar Diaz W 10 Jessie Feliciano	ESPN2	jw	C+	C+	B
Does Diaz make fights harder than they have to be, or is he just not that good?						
4/30/05	John Ruiz No-contest 12 James Toney	HBO	h	A	B+	B-
It's true; there's no other explanation: Ruiz is Jason Voorhees						
5/6/05	Sechew Powell KO 1 Cornelius Bundrage	Showtime	jm	C+	A	B+
And you thought double knockdowns only happened in the movies						
5/7/05	Juan Manuel Marquez W 12 Victor Polo	Showtime	f	A	C+	C+
He's not the most exciting guy in the business, but there may be no better mechanic around than Marquez						
5/7/05	**Diego Corrales KO 10 Jose Luis Castillo**	**Showtime**	**World l**	**A+**	**A**	**A+**
This is what it looks like when boxing gets it right; we hope you had the VCR going						
5/14/05	**Zab Judah KO 3 Cosme Rivera**	**PPV**	**world w**	**A**	**C**	**C+**
If this is the kind of stuff we should expect from the new Zab Judah, sign us up						
5/14/05	Winky Wright W 12 Felix Trinidad	PPV	m	A+	A-	B-
Proof again that at the top level, great boxers beat great sluggers						
5/20/05	O'Neill Bell W 12 Dale Brown	ESPN2	c	B+	A	B-
Judges finally give a guy credit for landing good, hard bodyshots all night long and everyone screams robbery						
5/28/05	Rafael Marquez W 12 Ricardo Vargas	PPV	b	A	C+	C
Marquez the cream of the crop at 118 and it's not close						
5/28/05	Jesus Chavez W 12 Carlos Hernandez	PPV	jl	A	B+	A
If you bought this card, this is the fight that made it worth the money						
5/28/05	Julio Cesar Chavez W 10 Ivan Robinson	PPV	w	D-	B	C+
Come on, admit it: This was fun; and the old man looked pretty good, didn't he?						
5/31/05	Israel Vazquez W 12 Armando Guerrero	ESPN2	jf	B+	C-	C
If you fell asleep at the halfway point and woke up for the decision, you'd think a robbery occurred; it didn't						
5/27/05	Kendall Holt W 12 Jaime Rangel	ESPN2	jw	C+	B+	C
Holt climbs off canvas to take split decision that should have been unanimous; come on: 116-110 Rangel??						
6/3/05	Michael Jennings KO 9 Gavin Down	Showtime	jw	C	C+	C
"Down" is a terrible name for a fighter, don't you think?						
6/3/05	Scott Harrison KO 4 Michael Brodie	Showtime	f	B+	C+	C
Can anyone imagine any circumstance under which Brodie could have won this? Nah, us neither						
6/4/05	**Ricky Hatton KO 11 Kostya Tszyu**	**Showtime**	**world jw**	**A+**	**B+**	**B+**
You think Tszyu feels dumb? Imagine how Joe Calzaghe feels						
6/9/05	Audley Harrison KO 7 Robert Davis	FOX SN	h	C+	D	D+
If this had taken place two or three years ago, maybe we'd have cared; maybe						
6/7/05	Julio Diaz KO 1 Marco Angel Perez	ESPN2	l	B-	D	C-
Don't begrudge Diaz this one; he rarely takes easy fights and had an easy one coming						
6/10/05	Shannon Briggs KO 3 Abraham Okine	ESPN2	h	C-	C+	C
Who else thinks that if you gave Atlas two weeks to get in shape he could knock Briggs out?						
6/11/05	Joel Casamayor D 12 Almazbek Raiymkulov	HBO	l	B+	B-	C+
Huge step up for Ramy, er, Raiky, uh, Kid Diamond, who isn't a young Tszyu but isn't bad, either						
6/11/05	Miguel Cotto KO 10 Muhammad Abdullaev	HBO	jw	A-	A	C
Okay: Why did Abdullaev have a zipper running down his spine?						
6/11/05	Laila Ali KO 3 Erin Toughill	PPV	sm	C+	D-	C-
Anyone still care about this?						
6/11/05	Kevin McBride KO 6 Mike Tyson	PPV	h	C	D-	C-
Mike doesn't have the stomach for fighting anymore; for trying to break a guy's arm, yes, but not for fighting						

Category Explanation: "Significance"—The importance of the bout to the division and the fighters' futures; "Matchup"—The quality of the fighters and the prefight determination of how their styles will mesh; "Result"—How the bout turned out, from the viewer's perspective.

(RING championship fights in **bold** type)

Division key: h—heavyweight; c—cruiserweight; lh—light heavyweight; sm—super middleweight; m—middleweight; jm—junior middleweight; w—welterweight; jw—junior welterweight; l—lightweight; jl—junior lightweight; f—featherweight; jf—junior featherweight; b—bantamweight; jb—junior bantamweight; fl—flyweight; jfl—junior flyweight; s—strawweight

Network key: PPV—Pay-Per-View; Show—Showtime; FOXSN—Fox Sports Net; Uni—Univision; Telef—Telefutura; Telem—Telemundo; HBO L—HBO Latino

JONES DVD NO KNOCKOUT

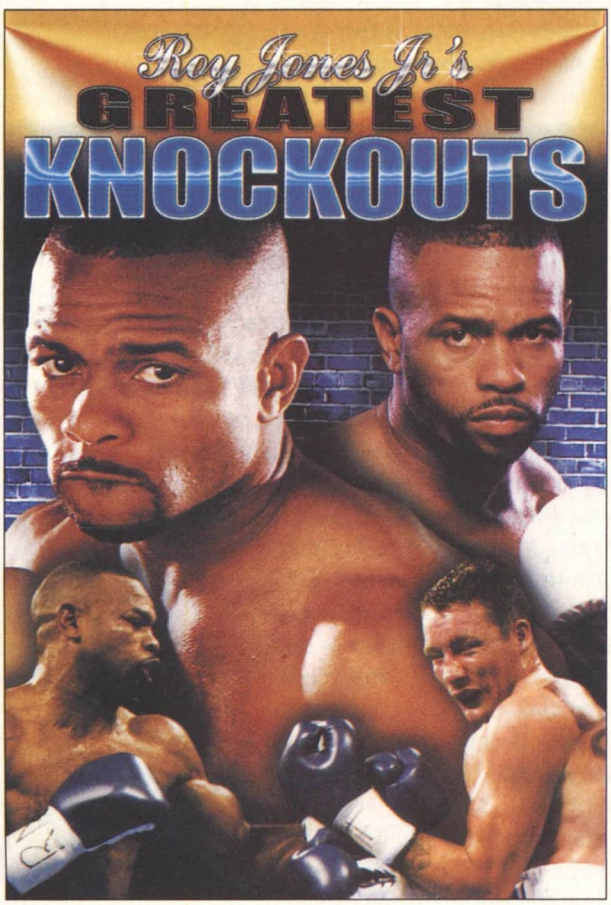
Roy Jones hasn't officially retired, but the release of his *Roy Jones Jr.'s Greatest Knockouts* (Razor Digital Entertainment, BHE Films, $8.88) may be an indication we've seen the enormously talented Jones in the ring for the last time.

Greatest Knockouts is a well-intentioned but ultimately flawed video. After a brief intro by Jones, we are treated to highlights of his bouts versus Percy Harris, Glenn Wolfe, Thulane Malinga, Vinny Pazienza, Tony Thornton, Merqui Sosa, Eric Lucas, Bryant Brannon, Montell Griffin, Virgil Hill, Otis Grant, Richard Hall, and Glenn Kelley—all backed by Jones' rap music.

At its best, the video shows more than just knockouts. Flashy combinations, footwork, and blinding speed are showcased round by round, leading to the stoppages. Whether playing with Malinga and Kelley or deadly serious against Griffin, we are reminded how special Jones was in his prime.

The problems, though, are numerous. Many of Jones' best knockouts aren't here. Perhaps the rights were impossible to acquire, but a video titled *Greatest Knockouts* should include Jones' destruction of Ricky Stackhouse, Glenn Thomas, Art Serwano, Thomas Tate, and Jorge Vaca. And what about home footage of early career knockouts?

The footage we do see has some production difficulties. All references to HBO are either covered or blurred, which distracts from the highlights. There's no Jim Lampley or Larry Merchant calling the action either, just some unidentified person in post-production designed to sound like he's ringside. Moreover, identical crowd noise repeats throughout and some punches are sound-enhanced, like those 1950s bouts on ESPN Classic.



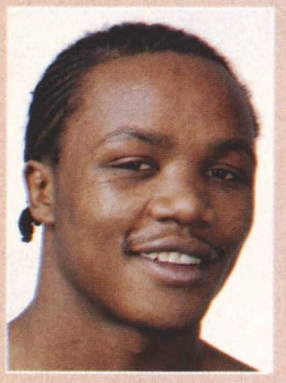
There are also several perplexing references to James Toney, who wasn't a Jones knockout victim, and the DVD cover shows an action shot of Jones versus Clinton Woods that doesn't appear in the video. The DVD itself has a photo of the first Jones-Antonio Tarver bout, a fight in which Jones failed to score a kayo.

For the casual boxing fan, seeing multiple highlights and 13 Jones knockouts will certainly be worth the price. For the boxing junkie and true Jones fans, a more definitive highlight film is needed, especially if Jones has called it quits.

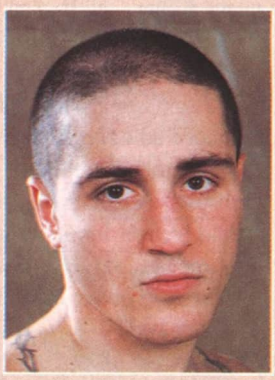
—Jay Deas

OUTSIDE THE ROPES

In May, Texas Governor Rick Perry signed into law a bill that will make his state more competitive in attracting top boxing matches. Senate Bill 796 caps the amount of taxes Texas will collect on the broadcast revenue from fights at $30,000. Prior to the passing of the bill, Texas assessed an uncapped three percent of the broadcast revenue, which discouraged promoters from staging major bouts in Texas because the tax laws were more advantageous in other states. "Texas already is a top location for boxing and this law will make it even more attractive," said Leo Vasquez, chairman of the Texas Commission of Licensing and Regulation (TDLR), which regulates combative sports in Texas. The bill also outlawed so-called toughman contests. "These tournaments are unsafe and unfair because they often match skilled participants against those with out boxing experience," said William Kuntz, executive director of the TDLR. "There are also fewer safeguards to protect the fighters. These fights are dangerous and people die in them" ... Lightweight champion **Diego Corrales** is appealing the WBC's order to fight an immediate rematch with **Jose Luis Castillo**, whom Corrales stopped in the 10th round on May 7 ... IBF junior middleweight titleholder **Kassim Ouma** has signed a promotional agreement with Golden Boy Promotions. "This is an exciting day for Golden Boy Promotions," said company president **Oscar De La Hoya**. "To bring someone of Kassim Ouma's caliber into our family is a thrill." Hall of Fame promoter **J Russell Peltz**, Ouma's original promoter, will continue to co-promote Ouma along with Golden Boy ... In another significant signing, promoter **Lou DiBella** announced he has reached an exclusive promotional agreement with heavyweight **Fres Oquendo**. "Fres is one of the most talented heavyweights in the world, and is ready to make another run at the world heavyweight championship," said DiBella ... The Asian Boxing Council is investigating the bogus Filipino boxer who was knocked out by junior bantamweight **Medgoen Singsurat** on May 27 in Thailand. Singsurat's victim claimed to be **Tata Polinar**, but according to sources in the Philippines, Polinar was training in Cebu when the Singsurat bout took place ... Mexican flyweight **Ruben Contreras**, 32, was seriously injured in a May 28 bout with **Brian Viloria** at the Staples Center in Los Angeles. Contreras collapsed moments after his bout with Viloria was stopped in the sixth round. The stricken fighter was rushed to nearby California Hospital Medical Center where he underwent surgery to relieve pressure caused by bleeding on his brain. Contreras, 9-17-3 (4), was still hospitalized in critical but stable condition as this issue went to press ... Bantamweight **Cruz Carvajal** tested positive for steroids after his loss to **Silence Mabuza** on May 13 in Las Vegas, and has been suspended indefinitely by the Nevada State Athletic Commission ... Former IBF lightweight titleholder **Paul Spadafora**, who was sentenced to 21 months to five years for shooting his girlfriend, will not be allowed to attend a six-month boot camp instead of serving prison time. The sentencing judge had recommended that Spadafora attend a special boot camp, which would have the boxer back on the streets by the end of 2005, but the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections decided against the judge's recommendation. If Spadafora completes a violence-prevention program, he can reapply for the boot camp in December. But in any event, Spadafora probably won't be able to return to boxing until mid-2006 at the earliest... Former welterweight champion **Ricardo Mayorga** will be retried on rape charges in Nicaragua after an appeals court overturned as earlier decision that cleared the boxer. The lawyer for Mayorga's accuser had argued that the original judge that heard the case was biased against his client. Ruth Tapia, spokeswoman for the Appeals Court of Managua, told the Associated Press that the original decision was voided because "the process wasn't correct." A new trial would be conducted before a different judge. A trial date has yet to be set ... In early-May the U.S. Senate voted to approve a bill that would establish a federal boxing commission. **Sen. John McCain** of Arizona sponsors the bill, which still must be considered by the House of Representatives ... South African heavyweight **Johnny Arthur**, 75, died on May 18 in White River, Mpumalanga. Arthur won a bronze medal at the 1948 Olympics and turned pro in May 1949 and tallied a record of 33-8 (27) before hanging up his gloves in 1957.



Ouma signs with Golden Boy



No boot camp for Spaddy

Mayorga to be tried again

THE PUNCHLINES

"One thing about this is that I'm not a politician. I talk the truth. I'm sure I've already offended some guys at the Legislature. But what are they going to do, beat me up?"

—Former heavyweight title challenger Scott LeDoux, who was elected Anoka (Minnesota) county commissioner last November.

"I see Oscar De La Hoya has created a new division for himself. Is he calling it 'Junior Oscar-weight' or 'Super Catchweight'? Personally, I think it's 'make Winky wait.'"

—Junior middleweight champion Winky Wright after hearing that De La Hoya's next PPV fight would be at 150 pounds.

"THE BIBLE OF BOXING"

RATINGS ANALYSIS

(For period ended June 15, 2005)

POUND-FOR-POUND

1. BERNARD HOPKINS
   Middleweight
2. FLOYD MAYWEATHER
   Junior Welterweight
3. WINKY WRIGHT
   Junior Middleweight
4. MARCO ANTONIO BARRERA
   Junior Lightweight
5. ERIK MORALES
   Junior Lightweight
6. MANNY PACQUIAO
   Featherweight
7. JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ
   Featherweight
8. RICKY HATTON
   Junior Welterweight
9. DIEGO CORRALES
   Lightweight
10. GLEN JOHNSON
    Light Heavyweight

HEAVYWEIGHTS: Lamon Brewster (eighth last issue) advances to sixth on the strength of his kayo of Andrew Golota (sixth last issue). Golota exits. Fres Oquendo (ninth last issue) also exits due to the fact he has not fought in more than 12 months. Brewster's promotion and the two departures advance Samuel Peter (10th last issue) to eighth and makes room for Wladimir Klitschko to return to the rankings at number nine and Jameel McCline to reenter at number 10.

CRUISERWEIGHTS: Guillermo Jones debuts at number five after stopping Kelvin Davis (fourth last issue). Davis departs. O'Neil Bell slips from third to sixth due to the controversial nature of his decision over seventh-ranked Dale Brown. Bell's demotion allows Carl Thompson to jump from fifth to third and Steve Cunningham to advance from sixth to fourth. Virgil Hill (eighth last issue) is gone because he hasn't fought in more than a year. Hill's exit bumps up Pierto Aurino (ninth last issue) and Alexander Gurov (10th last issue) one rung each, and makes room for Krzysztof Wlodarczyk at number 10.

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS: Tomasz Adamek enters at number seven, thanks to his victory over Paul Briggs, who slips from seventh to eighth. Adamek's inclusion pushes down Thomas Ulrich (eighth last issue) and Montell Griffin (ninth last issue) one place each. Eric Harding (10th last issue) departs.

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS: Mads Larsen (seventh last issue) exits due to more than a year's inactivity. His departure allows Manny Siaca (ninth last issue) and Otis Grant (10th last issue) to climb one spot each, and also allows Librado Andrade to debut at the 10th position.

MIDDLEWEIGHTS: Winky Wright takes over the number one spot due to his decision over Felix Trinidad (fourth last issue). Trinidad, who announced his retirement shortly afterward, exits. Also gone is Robert Allen (seventh last issue), another victim of more than 12 months of inactivity. Wright's arrival pushes down Felix Sturm (first last issue), Howard Eastman (second last issue) one place each. The departure of Allen allows Arthur Maselino Masoe (eighth last issue), Sam Soliman (ninth last issue), and Arthur Abraham (10th last issue) to move up one slot each, and makes room for Fernando Vargas to enter at number 10.

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS: Winky Wright remains champion despite also being ranked at 160 pounds because he has informed THE RING that he is considering continuing to fight at 154.

WELTERWEIGHTS: Cosme Rivera (fifth last issue) departs after being stopped by world champion Zab Judah, which allows Luis Collazo to advance from sixth to fifth. Oktay Urkal (ranked 10th at junior welter last issue) has moved up to welterweight, where he takes over the number-eight position after beating Frederic Klose.

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS: Ricky Hatton (sixth last issue) is the new world champion after stopping Kostya Tszyu, who tumbles to number four. Tszyu's decent pushes down everybody rated fourth or below last issue down one place, while Urkal's move to 147 makes room for Souleymane M'Baye to enter at number 10.

LIGHTWEIGHTS: Almazbek "Kid Diamond" Raiymkulov crashes the ratings at number seven after holding third-ranked Joel Casamayor to a draw. Raiymkulov's debut pushed down everybody below seventh last issue one spot and forces out Lakva Sim (10th last issue).

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS: Manny Pacquiao is installed at number three after relinquishing THE RING featherweight title in order to campaign in the 130-pound division. Pacquiao's arrival forces down Jesus Chavez (third last issue) and everybody rated below down one slot each, including Nobuhito Honmo (10th last issue), who exits.

FEATHERWEIGHTS: The title is vacant due to Pacquiao's move to the junior lightweight class. Michael Brodie (eighth last issue) departs following his TKO loss to fourth-ranked Scott Harrison. Brodie's exit allows Spend Abazi (ninth last issue) and Nicky Cook (10th last issue) to climb one rung each, and Hiroyuki Enoki to debut at number 10.

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS: No changes.

BANTAMWEIGHTS: Silence Mabuza (eighth last issue) and Cruz Carvajal (fifth last issue) trade places due to Mabuza's 12-round decision victory over Carvajal.

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS: No changes.

FLYWEIGHTS: No charges.

JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS: Will Grigsby returns at the number-two spot thanks to his decision over Victor Burgos, who slips from first to third. Roberto Vasquez (second last issue) takes over the number-one spot. Grigsby's return and Burgos' demotion pushed down everybody rated third and below last issue one place each. Beibis Mendoza (10th last issue) departs.

STRAWWEIGHTS: No changes.

POUND-FOR-POUND: Kostya Tszyu (third last issue) is gone after his surrender to Ricky Hatton, who debuts at number eight. Tszyu's removal pushes up Winky Wright (fourth last issue), Marco Antonio Barrera (fifth last issue), Erik Morales (sixth last issue), Manny Pacquiao (seventh last issue) and Juan Manuel Marquez (eighth last issue) one place each. ■

THE RING RATINGS

For Period Ended June 15, 2005

PHOTO BY JOHN GICHIGI/GETTY IMAGES

Beating Tszyu made Hatton the junior welterweight champion

How Our Ratings Are Compiled

Fighters recognized as champions by THE RING are rated at the top of their division, with the top 10 contenders listed below.

Championship vacancies can be filled by winning a box-off between THE RING'S number-one and number-two contenders, or, in certain instances, a box-off between our number-one and number-three contenders.

The only three occasions when a fighter will lose his championship status are when he retires, moves to another weight division, or is defeated in a championship bout.

Ratings By The Editors

HEAVYWEIGHTS
Weight Unlimited

Champ: VITALI KLITSCHKO
Ukraine 35-2 (34)

1. **CHRIS BYRD**
Flint, MI 38-2-1 (20)
2. **JOHN RUIZ**
Methuen, MA 41-5-1 (28)
3. **HASIM RAHMAN**
Baltimore, MD 40-5-1 (33)
4. **JAMES TONEY**
Ann Arbor, MI 68-4-2 (43)
5. **MONTE BARRETT**
Queens, NY 31-3 (17)
6. **LAMON BREWSTER**
Los Angeles, CA 32-2 (28)
7. **CALVIN BROCK**
Charlotte, NC 25-0 (20)
8. **SAMUEL PETER**
Las Vegas, NV 23-0 (20)
9. **WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO**
Ukraine 44-3 (40)
10. **JAMEEL McCLINE**
Clifton, NJ 31-5-3 (19)

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 154 pounds

Champ: WINKY WRIGHT
St. Petersburg, FL 49-3 (25)

1. **KASSIM OUMA**
W. Palm Beach, FL 21-1-1 (13)
2. **VERNO PHILLIPS**
Aurora, CO 38-9-1 (20)
3. **DANIEL SANTOS**
Puerto Rico 29-2-1 (20)
4. **TRAVIS SIMMS**
Norwalk, CT 24-0 (18)
5. **JAVIER CASTILLEJO**
Spain 58-5 (40)
6. **RODNEY JONES**
Lafayette, LA 36-3 (22)
7. **KOFI JANTUAH**
Las Vegas, NV 28-2 (18)
8. **ALEJANDRO GARCIA**
Mexico 24-1 (24)
9. **SERGEI DZINDZIRUK**
Germany 30-0 (21)
10. **SERGIO MARTINEZ**
Spain 33-1-1 (15)

FEATHERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 126 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ**
Mexico 44-2-1 (33)
2. **INJIN CHI**
South Korea 30-2-1 (18)
3. **ROCKY JUAREZ**
Houston, TX 23-0 (16)
4. **SCOTT HARRISON**
Scotland 24-2-2 (14)
5. **VICTOR POLO**
Colombia 34-5-3 (24)
6. **MANUEL MEDINA**
Mexico 63-14 (29)
7. **CHRIS JOHN**
Indonesia 35-0-1 (19)
8. **SPEND ABAZI**
Denmark 31-1 (10)
9. **NICKY COOK**
England 24-0 (14)
10. **HIROYUKI ENOKI**
Japan 22-0-1 (17)

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 122 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **OSCAR LARIOS**
Mexico 55-3-1 (35)
2. **MAHYAR MONSHIPOUR**
France 27-2-2 (18)
3. **ISRAEL VAZQUEZ**
Mexico 38-3 (28)
4. **JOAN GUZMAN**
Dominican Republic 23-0 (17)
5. **RICARDO CORDOBA**
Panama 24-0 (17)
6. **CELESTINO CABALLERO**
Panama 22-2 (16)
7. **WAYNE McCULLOUGH**
Las Vegas, NV 27-5 (18)
8. **YODDAMRONG SITHYODTHONG**
Thailand 41-2-1 (18)
9. **JOSE LUIS VALBUENA**
Venezuela 24-4-1 (14)
10. **SERGIO MANUEL MEDINA**
Argentina 22-0 (13)

BANTAMWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 118 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **RAFAEL MARQUEZ**
Mexico 34-3 (30)
2. **HOZUMI HASEGAWA**
Japan 18-2 (5)
3. **VEERAPOL SAHAPROM**
Thailand 47-2-2 (33)
4. **RATANACHAI VORAPIN**
Thailand 63-8 (42)
5. **SILENCE MABUZA**
South Africa 18-0 (15)
6. **GENARO GARCIA**
Mexico 34-4 (20)
7. **TOSHIAKI NISHIOKA**
Japan 24-4-3 (14)
8. **CRUZ CARVAJAL**
Mexico 25-13-1 (21)
9. **RICARDO VARGAS**
Mexico 38-11-3 (12)
10. **JHONNY GONZALEZ**
Mexico 28-4 (25)

CRUISERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 200 pounds

Champ: JEAN-MARC MORMECK
France 31-2 (21)

1. **WAYNE BRAITHWAITE**
Guyana 21-1 (17)
2. **JOHNNY NELSON**
England 44-12-2 (29)
3. **CARL THOMPSON**
England 33-6 (25)
4. **STEVE CUNNINGHAM**
Philadelphia, PA 17-0 (9)
5. **GUILLERMO JONES**
Panama 32-3-2 (25)
6. **O'NEIL BELL**
Atlanta, GA 24-1-1 (22)
7. **DALE BROWN**
Canada 33-4-1 (21)
8. **PIETRO AURINO**
Italy 31-2 (14)
9. **ALEXANDER GUROV**
Ukrain 38-4-1 (33)
10. **KRZYSZTOF WLODARCZYK**
Poland 32-1 (25)

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 175 pounds

Champ: GLEN JOHNSON
Miami, FL 42-9-2 (28)

1. **ANTONIO TARVER**
Orlando, FL 22-3 (18)
2. **ZSOLT ERDEI**
Hungary 22-0 (13)
3. **ROY JONES**
Pensacola, FL 49-3 (38)
4. **JULIO GONZALEZ**
Huntington Beach, CA 38-2 (23)
5. **FABRICE TIOZZO**
France 47-2 (31)
6. **CLINTON WOODS**
England 37-3-1 (23)
7. **TOMASZ ADAMEK**
Poland 29-0 (20)
8. **PAUL BRIGGS**
Australia 23-2 (17)
9. **THOMAS ULRICH**
Germany 28-1 (19)
10. **MONTELL GRIFFIN**
Chicago, IL 47-6 (30)

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 168 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **JOE CALZAGHE**
Wales 39-0 (31)
2. **MIKKEL KESSLER**
Denmark 36-0 (27)
3. **MARKUS BEYER**
Germany 32-2 (12)
4. **JEFF LACY**
St. Petersburg, FL 19-0 (15)
5. **ANTHONY MUNDINE**
Australia 23-3 (18)
6. **DANNY GREEN**
Australia 19-2 (18)
7. **ROBIN REID**
England 38-4-1 (27)
8. **MANNY SIACA**
Puerto Rico 18-5 (16)
9. **OTIS GRANT**
Canada 36-2-1 (17)
10. **LIBRADO ANDRADE**
Mexico 22-0 (16)

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 160 pounds

Champ: BERNARD HOPKINS
Philadelphia, PA 46-2-1 (32)

1. **WINKY WRIGHT**
St. Petersburg, FL 49-3 (25)
2. **FELIX STURM**
Germany 23-1 (11)
3. **HOWARD EASTMAN**
England 40-2 (35)
4. **OSCAR DE LA HOYA**
Los Angeles, CA 37-4 (29)
5. **JERMAIN TAYLOR**
Little Rock, AR 23-0 (17)
6. **KINGSLEY IKEKE**
Canada 23-1 (13)
7. **MASELINO MASOE**
New Zealand 26-2 (25)
8. **SAM SOLIMAN**
Australia 30-7 (12)
9. **ARTHUR ABRAHAM**
Germany 15-0 (14)
10. **FERNANDO VARGAS**
Oxnard, CA 25-2 (22)

WELTERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 147 pounds

Champ: ZAB JUDAH
Brooklyn, NY 34-2 (25)

1. **ANTONIO MARGARITO**
Mexico 32-4 (23)
2. **CORY SPINKS**
St. Louis, MO 34-3 (11)
3. **SHANE MOSLEY**
Pomona, CA 40-4 (35)
4. **THOMAS DAMGAARD**
Denmark 35-0 (27)
5. **LUIS COLLAZO**
Queens, NY 25-1 (11)
6. **KERMIT CINTRON**
Reading, PA 24-1 (22)
7. **JOSE ANTONIO RIVERA**
Worcester, MA 37-4-1(24)
8. **OKTAY URKAL**
Germany 35-3 (11)
9. **DAVID ESTRADA**
Chicago, IL 18-2 (9)
10. **SEBASTIAN LUJAN**
Argentina 22-2-1 (14)

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 140 pounds

Champ: RICKY HATTON
England 39-0 (29)

1. **ARTURO GATTI**
Jersey City, NJ 39-6 (30)
2. **VIVIAN HARRIS**
Brooklyn, NY 25-1-1 (17)
3. **FLOYD MAYWEATHER**
Grand Rapids, MI 33-0 (22)
4. **KOSTYA TSZYU**
Australia 31-2 (25)
5. **MIGUEL COTTO**
Puerto Rico 24-0 (20)
6. **SHARMBA MITCHELL**
Washington, D.C. 56-4 (31)
7. **JUNIOR WITTER**
England 31-1-2 (19)
8. **DeMARCUS CORLEY**
Washington, D.C. 29-4-1 (16)
9. **LOVEMORE NDOU**
Australia 40-8-1 (26)
10. **SOULEYMANE M'BAYE**
France 31-1 (16)

LIGHTWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 135 pounds

Champ: DIEGO CORRALES
Las Vegas, NV 40-2 (33)

1. **JOSE LUIS CASTILLO**
Mexico 52-7-1 (46)
2. **JOEL CASAMAYOR**
Miami, FL 31-3-1 (19)
3. **JUAN LAZCANO**
El Paso, TX 33-3-1 (25)
4. **JUAN DIAZ**
Houston, TX 27-0 (13)
5. **JULIO DIAZ**
Coachella, CA 31-3 (23)
6. **ACELINO FREITAS**
Brazil 36-1 (31)
7. **ALMAZBEK RAIYMKULOV**
Kyrgyzstan 20-0-1 (12)
8. **JAVIER JAUREGUI**
Mexico 49-11-2 (34)
9. **ARTUR GRIGORIAN**
Uzbekistan 37-1 (23)
10. **JULIEN LORCY**
France 56-4-2 (41)

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 130 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **MARCO ANTONIO BARRERA**
Mexico 60-4 (42)
2. **ERIK MORALES**
Mexico 48-2 (34)
3. **MANNY PACQUIAO**
Philippines 39-3-2 (30)
4. **JESUS CHAVEZ**
Mexico 41-3 (28)
5. **VICENTE MOSQUERA**
Panama 21-1-1 (10)
6. **YODSANAN NANTHACHAI**
Thailand 43-3-1 (25)
7. **JORGE BARRIOS**
Argentina 43-2-1 (31)
8. **CARLOS HERNANDEZ**
Bellflower, CA 41-5-1 (24)
9. **CASSIUS BALOYI**
South Africa 31-1 (16)
10. **ROBBIE PEDEN**
Australia 25-2 (14)

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 115 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **MARTIN CASTILLO**
Mexico 28-1 (16)
2. **KATSUSHIGE KAWASHIMA**
Japan 28-3 (18)
3. **LUIS PEREZ**
Nicaragua 23-1 (15)
4. **FERNANDO MONTIEL**
Mexico 30-1-1 (24)
5. **ALEXANDER MUNOZ**
Venezuela 27-1 (25)
6. **JOSE NAVARRO**
Los Angeles, CA 22-1 (9)
7. **MASAMORI TOKUYAMA**
North Korea 30-3-1 (8)
8. **IVAN HERNANDEZ**
Mexico 20-1-1 (13)
9. **MARK JOHNSON**
Washington, D.C. 44-4 (28)
10. **ERIC MOREL**
Madison, WI 35-2 (18)

FLYWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 112 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **PONGSAKLEK WONJONGKAM**
Thailand 55-2 (29)
2. **LORENZO PARRA**
Venezuela 25-0 (17)
3. **VIC DARCHINYAN**
Australia 23-0 (18)
4. **IRENE PACHECO**
Colombia 29-1 (22)
5. **OMAR NARVAEZ**
Argentina 18-0-2 (12)
6. **JORGE ARCE**
Mexico 39-3-1 (29)
7. **ROSENDO ALVAREZ**
Nicaragua 34-2-2 (22)
8. **BRAHIM ASLOUM**
France 18-0 (7)
9. **TAKEFUMI SAKATA**
Japan 23-2-1 (10)
10. **HUSSEIN HUSSEIN**
Australia 28-2 (21)

JR. FLYWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 108 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **ROBERTO VASQUEZ**
Panama 19-1 (16)
2. **WILL GRIGSBY**
St. Paul, MN 18-2-1 (11)
3. **VICTOR BURGOS**
Mexico 37-14-3 (22)
4. **HUGO CAZARES**
Mexico 20-3-1 (14)
5. **PICHIT SIRIWAT**
Thailand 30-2 (14)
6. **NELSON DIEPPA**
Puerto Rico 22-2-2 (13)
7. **ERIC ORTIZ**
Mexico 24-4-1 (16)
8. **ULISES SOLIS**
Mexico 16-1 (12)
9. **JOSE AGUIRRE**
Mexico 33-3-1 (20)
10. **KERMIN GUARDIA**
Colombia 35-4 (21)

STRAWWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 105 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **YUTAKA NIIDA**
Japan 18-1-3 (8)
2. **MUHAMMAD RACHMAN**
Indonesia 49-7-4 (21)
3. **IVAN CALDERON**
Puerto Rico 22-0 (5)
4. **KATSUNARI TAKAYAMA**
Japan 15-1 (7)
5. **ISAAC BUSTOS**
Mexico 24-7-3 (13)
6. **EAGLE KYOWA**
Japan 13-1 (5)
7. **JUAN LANDAETA**
Venezuela 18-3-1 (15)
8. **OMAR SOTO**
Mexico 14-2-1 (10)
9. **DANIEL REYES**
Colombia 34-3-1 (29)
10. **RODEL MAYOL**
Philippines 21-0 (16)

RYAN OUT LOUD

By Jeff Ryan

IN THE FOURFRONT

In a span of three weeks, between April 30 and May 21, the Greek god, Pugilistica, rescued us from the predictability of the NBA playoffs by scheduling four high-profile bouts for our viewing pleasure. And in typical fashion, boxing showed how great a sport it can be one minute and how embarrassing a mess it can be the next as we were treated to a classic, an upset, a scandal, and a farce. Here are a few thoughts on the fight game's merry, hairy month of May (plus the last day of April).

The Classic: Diego Corrales-Jose Luis Castillo had the potential to be a gem because of the two warriors' punching power, but who thought it would have become the legendary battle that unfolded in Las Vegas? The only way Corrales-Castillo won't win Fight of the Year honors is if the combatants in some other showdown order their corners to pull off their gloves, cut off their handwraps, and allow them to stage a bare-knuckle brawl.

To me, nothing is more exciting in boxing—and that includes everything from Arturo Gatti landing a left hook to Mia St. John jumping rope—than a round in which both fighters are hurt. (Round one of Juan Meza-Jaime Garza, round one of Marvin Hagler-Thomas Hearns, round 10 of Riddick Bowe-Evander Holyfield I, to name just a few.) When Corrales, his left eye closed, fell twice in the 10th, he sure seemed finished. But then a barrage of desperation punches left Castillo helpless along the ropes. With apologies to Yogi Berra, when the score is 10-0 in baseball, it really *is* over. In *boxing*, it's never over 'til it's over.

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

Corrales-Castillo: More than merely the Fight of the Year

Because Corrales and Castillo spilled their blood, sweat, tears, and testosterone all over the canvas in 2005, their war probably rates as not just the Fight of the Year, but also the Fight of the Decade and Fight of the Century too. In that case, it really didn't matter who went home with two alphabet organizations' lightweight belts that night. Both fighters left the ring with titles that mean a lot more.

The Upset: With his spanking of the favored Felix Trinidad at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas on May 14, Winky Wright spared us from a Trinidad-Bernard Hopkins rematch, a sequel that was in demand in some circles but had absolutely no appeal for me. (Trinidad was outclassed by Hopkins the first time. What would be different the next?) And now, after being dominated by Wright, it's refreshing not to hear Trinidad talk about invoking a rematch clause for Wright-Trinidad II. "Tito" won a total of just two rounds on the three scorecards and landed 58 punches in 36 minutes. Trinidad was exposed as one-dimensional and overrated and quite properly seeks only a rematch with retirement.

PHOTO BY JED JACOBSOHN/GETTY IMAGES

Winky: Deserves date with "The Executioner"

Meanwhile, all efforts should be made to match Wright with Hopkins. (Assuming "The Executioner" gets past Jermain Taylor in a middleweight defense that was pending as we went to press.) True, Wright-Hopkins, a clash of two masterful technicians, could resemble a scoreless soccer game. Regardless, Wright has earned the opportunity and Hopkins shouldn't leave the big stage without being tested by the most frustrating style he will have encountered in 17 years in the ring.

Forget Trinidad, Joe Calzaghe, Glen Johnson, or the other fights Hopkins and his loyalists have talked about. His farewell defense next January should be against Wright. Let's see if The Executioner can execute one more tough challenger or if Winky will instead execute one more perfect game plan.

The Scandal: James "Lights Out" Toney testing positive for steroids following his win over WBA heavyweight king John Ruiz may actually do more to scare teenagers away from performance-enhancing drugs than any public service announcement, coach's lecture, or film clip of a withering, cancer-ridden Lyle Alzado ever could. Toney on steroids? Did you see his body? What was he taking? Abdominal growth hormone? If that's the kind of physique you get from steroids, let me keep training on pizza and beer.

Toney, of course, denied using the stuff. And his physician claimed that it was a combination of medicines to control inflammation and promote tissue growth in the fighter's surgically repaired biceps that was responsible for the positive test result. What Toney should have said in his defense was that he needed steroids to beat Ruiz about as much as Jennifer Lopez needs the perfect shade of lip gloss to attract men.

Once again, Ruiz lost to an ex-middleweight and fought with no fire. When he retired after the bout, boxing fans the world over began planning a tickertape parade. Unfortunately, though, Ruiz had a change of heart. And after Toney's positive drug test, "The Quiet Man" was even given his WBA crown back. Hey, way to go, John. Another successful title defense!

Actually, boxing would be better off if both of these losers retired. Ruiz is a timid stiff and Toney a bullying big mouth. Lights Out (which must refer to his brain circuits) was particularly obnoxious before and after this fight, doing everything from accusing Ruiz of being a pretend Puerto Rican to waving a victory cigar in the ring. A victory cigar? For a points win over Ruiz? A candy cigarette would have been more appropriate.

The Farce: If we can't get rid of Ruiz, let's at least hope that Andrew Golota will no longer appear on HBO, unless he's playing a thug on *The Sopranos* or is the focus of an investigative piece on athletic head cases on an installment of *Real Sports With Bryant Gumbel*. The May Pole lasted just 53 seconds with Lamon Brewster. But the fight wasn't as close as the time of the knockout would seem to indicate.

Two questions immediately come to mind. First, whatever happened to HBO's pronouncement of a few months ago that it was boycotting the heavyweights? That boycott lasted about as long as a Don King boycott of live microphones. Second, what did Golota do to warrant yet another high-profile bout and paper title shot? He lost a decision to Ruiz and fought a draw with Chris Byrd, that's what. Geez, remember when you needed to actually *win* to land a big TV date?

If HBO isn't going to adhere to a standard of quality, at least THE RING can. The next time the editors even dream of putting Golota in the top 10, they should be forced to watch an endless loop of his career lowlights—the disqualification losses for low blows, the freeze-up against Lennox Lewis, the meek surrender to Michael Grant, the attempt to quit against Tyson, the Brewster fiasco—set to polka music.

DIGGING DEEP

By Ivan Goldman

DEATH, TAXES, AND JOHN RUIZ

I have this recurring nightmare that it's billions of years in the future, the sun has long since burned out, and the Earth is a shriveled, frozen rock, but grapple-monger John Ruiz is still out there in the galaxy somewhere with that crappy WBA title belt of his. He's clutching and complaining and hitting and holding, and the referee, a creature from the bar in *Star Wars*, apparently believes everything is hunky-dory.

Meanwhile, promoter Don King and manager Norm Stone float in space like two giant asteroid heads. They're yelling into old-time microphones that the great Ruiz will soon make title defense Number 79,648,205. Another Ruiz wrestle-thon starts, this time refereed by a jumpy man with a Wyatt Earp mustache and Charlie Manson eyes. Oh no, U.N. Ambassador John Bolton! All across the cosmos, viewers switch channels.

Sometimes I wake up screaming from this other nightmare: A remarkably preserved King, still a Republican foot soldier, looks on approvingly as George Bush's grownup great-great grandkids have me tied to a theater chair with my eyelids clamped open, just like that delinquent in *A Clockwork Orange*. Dressed like church ushers, they're forcing me to watch the three-part Ruiz-Evander Holyfield ugly-thon over and over. They came up with this diabolical torture after seeing something like it in a Classic Comics version of George Orwell's *1984* they found in the Yale bookstore.

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Ruiz continues to haunt

I plead piteously with my tormentors that I'm sorry I missed Ruiz' last press conference, but see, my dog ate my alarm clock. They cackle with chilling lack of mercy and don't believe me, basically because I'm lying. Please, I beg them, just once, let me see a 1996 tape of David Tua walking across the ring and putting Ruiz to sleep while the sound of the opening bell still echoes off the ceiling. Their leader, now wearing a Ruiz T-shirt, coldly replies, "Nothing doing. We're erasing the Tua bout from your memory bank."

As the Ruiz-Holyfield tapes roll on, Ruiz-Tua fades into the twilight of uncertainty. *Maybe they're right,* I think in my nightmare. *Maybe Ruiz is not some mediocre squid that's been packaged and repackaged by a cynical promoter who can't seem to understand that nobody can stand to watch this guy anymore. Maybe Ruiz is as good as*

heavyweights get nowadays, even though somebody like Ezzard Charles, yet another former middleweight, could have dispatched him in four or five rounds.

My captors allow me occasional meal breaks in the restaurant of Fantasy Springs Casino, a fight venue in Indio, California, which has been transported into my nightmare along with its menu. *No, wait,* I tell myself, *this can't possibly be real, because I remember seeing James Toney drive a stake through the pretender's heart in Madison Square Garden. He confused and knocked Ruiz silly for 12 rounds. If it weren't true, it wouldn't have been on HBO, right?* And that same blessed night Ruiz retired at last, complaining yet again that no one appreciates him. But I know some hideous circumstance is still lurking out there, and then I'm hurled into my third, most repulsive nightmare.

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

Morales-Barrera I is Goldman's gold standard

In this one, Toney tested positive for a banned substance used as post-surgical healing medication for his torn biceps and triceps. The alphabet gang gave Ruiz back his title and he came out of retirement after a week-and-a-half of sulking, which means more of his clinching and carping and all the rest. King and Stone are laughing and celebrating and dancing around Toney's test report. And, oh no, they're setting up another title defense for Ruiz.

I can't take anymore. My washed brain bubbles over. Maybe Ruiz is the true heavyweight champion, just like they tell us. Maybe Ruiz is forever. I can be certain of only two things. First, my recurring nightmares don't amount to a hill of beans in this crazy world, and second, as they contemplate future opponents, Ruiz, King, and Stone won't go looking for Toney anytime soon.

SORTING THE BEST: Now that we've had some distance from the spectacular lightweight championship bout between Jose Luis Castillo and Diego Corrales, we can better determine where it fits in history. Lots of experts say it's the best fight they ever saw. I was there, and it's one of the best I ever saw too. But the greatest fight I've attended was Marco Antonio Barrera vs. Erik Morales I. Tied for second was Barrera-Morales III, Barrera vs. Kennedy McKinney, and Castillo-Corrales. If I'd had the privilege of attending Arturo Gatti vs. Micky Ward I, it would certainly be in there somewhere. In all these contests, the combatants emptied their reserves and pushed on in triple-time anyway. What they left in the ring went well beyond anything we have a right to expect.

Lots of folks rate Castillo-Corrales at the top because of its spectacular ending. But the end was also faintly dissatisfying because penalizing Corrales for removing his mouthpiece helped him, which is hot the purpose of penalties. Referee Tony Weeks followed the rules precisely and efficiently. But this time the rules shot an arrow into the contest. Whether that arrow determined the victory is something we'll never know.

As the memories of older fights fade, newer ones can look better. It's like agreeing with whomever you last spoke with. But my memory is not so short that I can overlook the fact that Barrera, McKinney, and Morales all moved around more than Castillo and Corrales, giving their fights an added dimension.

As for Ward-Gatti I, I'll forget my own name before I forget its ninth round, when Gatti finally sank to one knee from that hellacious liver shot. He got up, and Ward punished him horrifically in the same place, yet he came back to hurt Ward and then nearly went down again because somehow Ward came back. It was heart-stopping, an instant legend, and the most thrilling round I ever saw.

When Barrera fought McKinney, McKinney went down in the eighth and ninth. Then Barrera went down in the 11th, and McKinney went down twice in the 12th, for yet another fantastic turn of events. It was 11½ rounds of furious action from two of the best fighters in the world, with a dramatic kayo finish, storybook changes of momentum, and no controversy. Barrera-Morales I was just as savage, teetered back and forth a hundred times in terms of momentum, and, like Castillo-Corrales, was close as a razor's edge.

The fact that neither man went down in the 36 rounds of Barrera vs. Morales adds to the lore of their trilogy. They hated each other too much to hit the canvas. And though the decisions in their first two fights were incorrect, they cancelled each other out, which for me erased all controversy. Most people liked the third fight best. It was a perfect blend of savagery and elegance. But their first battle, which was closer, sticks harder to my memory and was more deeply satisfying. Boxing is a sweet science, but fights aren't science fairs. At some point, choosing number one comes down to subjective, not objective, judgment. You must look inside your brain, your heart, and ultimately your gut.

FINAL BELL: Castillo-Corrales was the first big Las Vegas fight in years that didn't have the late, much-loved fight-writer emeritus Jack Welsh seated in the media section. He hadn't done much writing for some time, and months before he passed away, word got out that he couldn't pay his rent. Boxing people in Las Vegas passed the hat and Bob Arum of Top Rank threw in thousands. Stand-up behavior from a man I and many other fight writers have slammed repeatedly for years.

BEING THERE

PUNCH FITNESS

IF YOU GO:

Location: 4020 West Hillsboro Blvd., Deerfield Beach, FL 33442. Phone: 954-428-8990. E-mail: info@punchfitness.net. Web: www.punchfitness.net

Directions: Take I-95 to the West Hillsboro exit. Continue to travel west past Military Trail. Continue west, cross over Powerline Road, and the Deerfield Mall is immediately on your left hand side. Deerfield Mall is the plaza with Publix, Marshalls, T.J. Maxx, Sports Authority, Office Max, Rag Shop, and Movie Theater. From 441 (State Road 7): Take Hillsboro Blvd. East past Lyons Road. Continue over the bridge and just before you reach Powerline Road the Deerfield Mall is on your right hand side.

Hours of Operation: Monday, Wednesday, & Friday: 6:00 a.m. until 9:30 p.m. Tuesday & Thursday: 9:00 a.m. until 9:00 p.m. Saturday: 9:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. Sunday: 9:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m.

Who to look out for: Punch Fitness is the home base of Zab Judah and team. Middleweight Daniel Edouard is also a frequent visitor. Other notables who have trained there include Andre Dirrell, Anthony Dirrell, Sultan Ibragimov, Timur Ibragimov, Carl Daniels, Jose Celaya, Ada Velez, Kenny Lunkins, Michelle Linden, Erin Toughill, and Ultimate Fighter Manny Reyes Jr.

Advice to greenhorns: Don't be shy. Staff, members, and the pros are equally willing to help you get started or offer a pointer or two. The instructors will help motivate you and whip you into shape in no time.

Punch Fitness even has its own Hummer

Punch Fitness is located in an upscale mall

By Marc Lichtenfeld

PHOTOS BY DUANE LONG

Many boxing gyms are run by ex-fighters who capitalize on their knowledge and love of the sport. Others are the property of crusty, old trainers trying to make a buck the only way they know how. Most of these gyms are dingy, humid boxes of suffering, which harden fighters into the warriors they need to be.

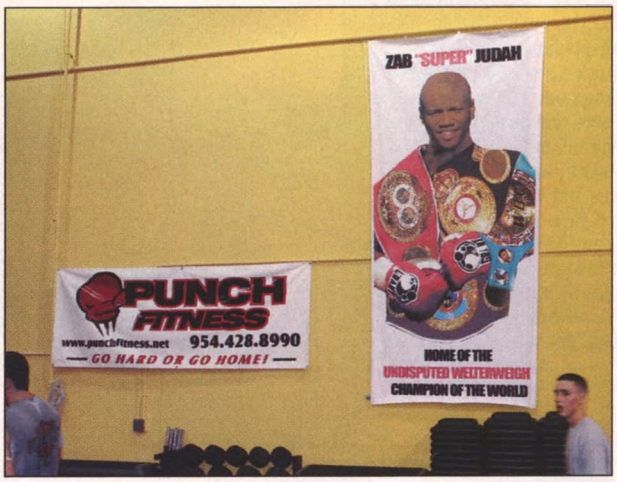
But there is a new breed of boxing gym popping up around the country. As more and more so-called "white collar" boxers look for a place to train, they are seeking out not the musty old gyms straight out of Central Casting, but clean, well-lit gyms, with top-quality equipment and trainers.

Enter Punch Fitness in Deerfield Beach, Florida, located just down the road from the headquarters of Don King Productions. Owners Michael, Leslie, and David Burman are neither crusty nor veterans of the Sweet Science. The three entrepreneurs saw an opportunity to provide everyday fitness enthusiasts with the hardcore workout that boxing provides.

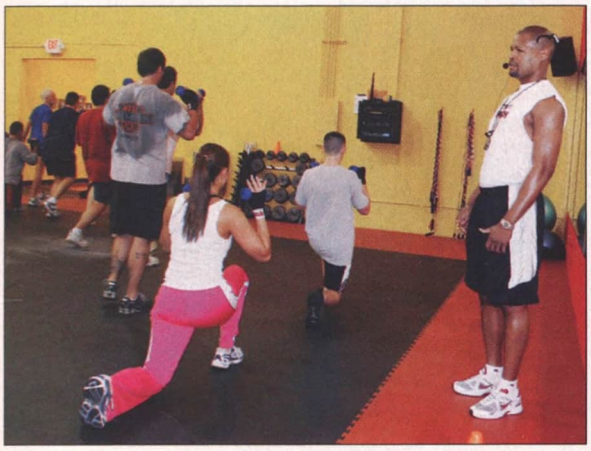
But before you assume this is some fancy-pants gym where no real pugilism

Gym owners Michael and David Burman

You can also pump iron at Punch Fitness



A poster of the gym's most famous client smiles down from above



Trainer Kenny Lumpkins keeps his exercise class moving

takes place, think again. The gym, which has been open for less than a year, has become the main training facility for welterweight champ Zab Judah. The "Super" one started training there in January 2005 for his fight with Cory Spinks. It was also where Daniel Edouard mixed it up with the entire Judah clan prior to his fight with Jermain Taylor.

The facility boasts more than 10,000 square feet, two rings (one of them raised), more than 30 heavybags, four speedbags, four double-end bags, four uppercut bags, weight training, cardio equipment, and a specialized abdomen training center.

Members can take advantage of a wide range of classes, including a heavybag workout taught by professional cruiserweight Kenny Lunkins and Boot Camp Boxing led by former WIBA bantamweight titleholder Ada Velez. But don't be intimidated by the staff's credentials; they're as eager to help as they are tough. Personal instruction is also available.

The gym has a family business atmosphere. Michael, Leslie, and David know every member who walks in the door and can also be seen hitting the bags during off-peak hours.

Yoel Judah, father, manager, and trainer of brothers Zab, Daniel, and Josiah, likes Punch Fitness because, "It's got everything we need. We met Mike and everyone; they're all good people. They took us in, and in return we brought a lot of guys in. It's a good fit."

If you enjoy working out, Punch Fitness is a terrific place to get in shape. If you enjoy working out *and* love boxing, it will be difficult to find a better one. In how many other gyms can you hit the heavybag while right behind you is Zab Judah doing the same to a sparring partner? ■

A female client works the pads with trainer Marcus Figueroa

CAMERA CLICKS

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

This is Winky Wright's way of saying, "Don't call me Ronald." Reminding everyone what his nickname is, the junior middleweight champion of the world winks and tells us that he's got everything under control heading into his fight with Tito, and it turned out that he was absolutely right.

PHOTO BY ROLAND MAGUNIA/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Calling it a career: Dariusz Michalczewski, no longer undefeated or even one-defeated, chose what seems to be the perfect time to walk away from boxing, and he formally announced his retirement at this press conference in Hamburg, Germany, in June. "The Polish Tiger," once 48-0 (38), finished his career a still-impressive 48-2, including 23 successful defenses of the one light heavyweight belt that didn't particularly interest Roy Jones.

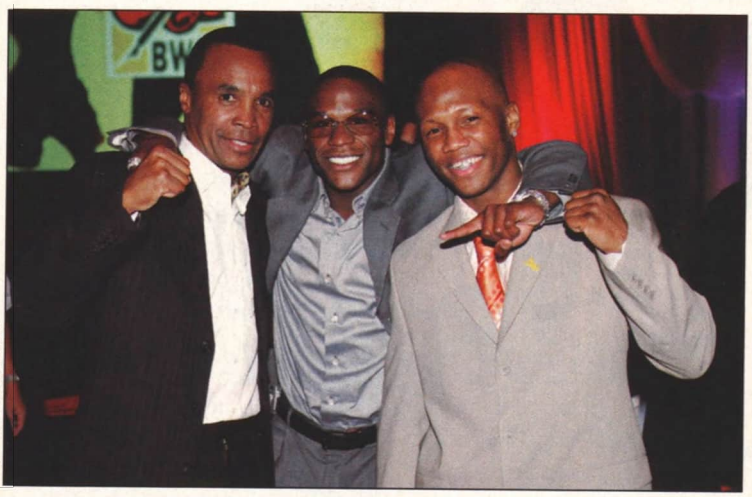


PHOTO BY MIKE GREENHILL

In this photo of three of the quickest, slickest, most skillful fighters of the last few decades, you'll notice Floyd Mayweather and Zab Judah are smiling very wide, while Sugar Ray Leonard isn't quite grinning ear-to-ear. That might have something to do with the fact that Leonard didn't take kindly to Mayweather's insistence that he would have kicked Sugar Ray's ass if they'd met in their primes. (That's not just a "Camera Clicks" joke; Mayweather and Leonard really did go at it verbally at the Boxing Writers' awards banquet in May.)

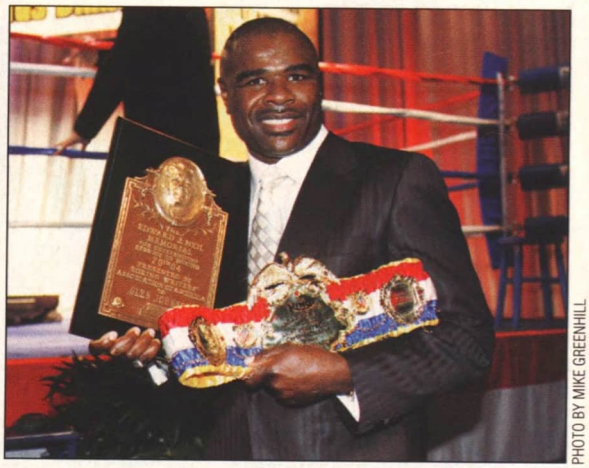


PHOTO BY MIKE GREENHILL

In contrast to the belt Michalczewski held for most of his career, here's a light heavyweight strap that really means something. Glen Johnson shows off two pieces of meaningful hardware, actually—his Ring *championship belt, and his award from the Boxing Writers Association of America recognizing him as the 2004 Fighter of the Year. It's quite a bounty for a guy who'd won just three of his previous 11 bouts heading into his historic '04 campaign.*

PHOTO BY PETER MACDIARMID/GETTY IMAGES

Taking the term "shadow boxing" literally: British amateur (and soon-to-be professional) star Amir Khan poses with the opponent who follows him wherever he goes in the Turbine Hall at Tate Britain in London. Logic might tell you that Khan's bout with his shadow would be scored a draw, but Khan actually won by kayo in just 10 seconds, since his shadow hit the floor at the opening bell and couldn't get up.

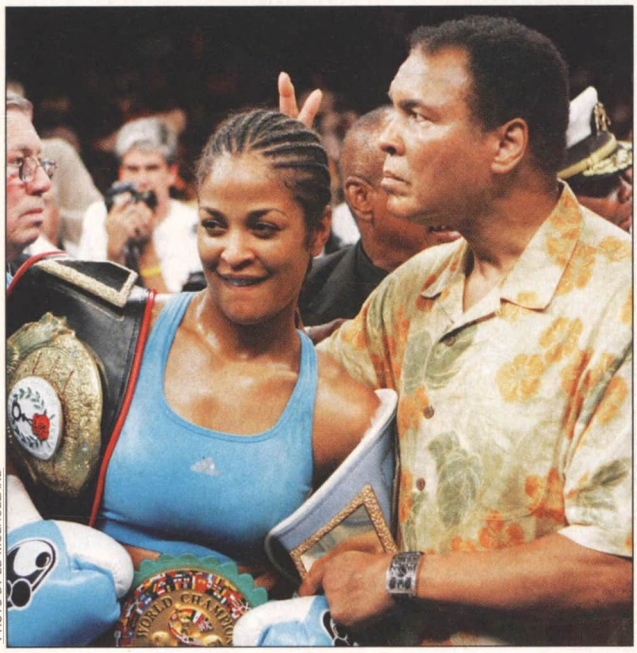
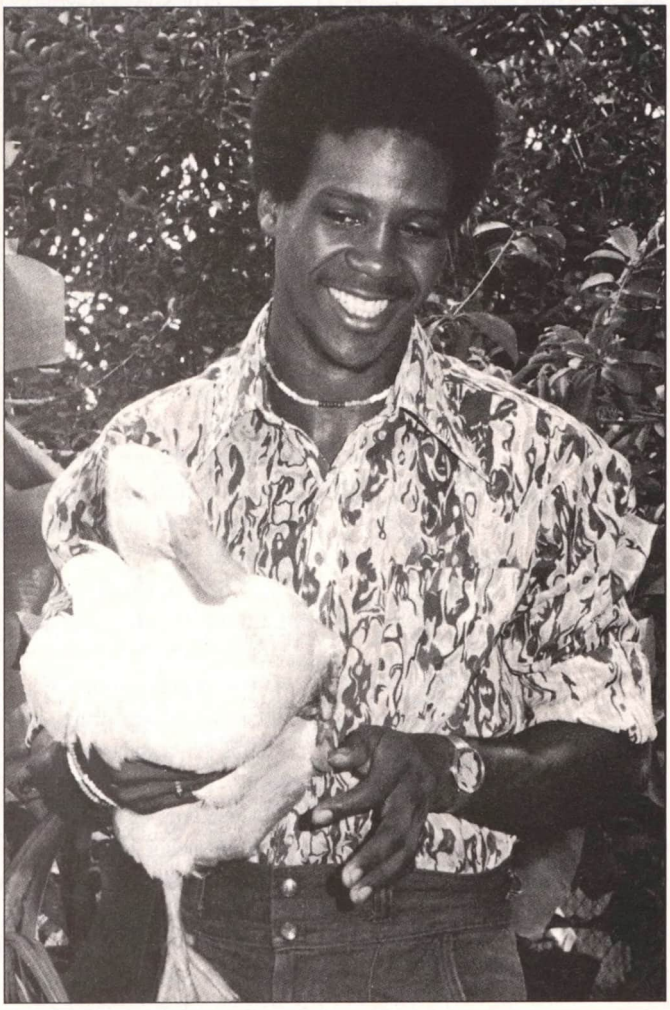


PHOTO BY ED MULHOLLAND

You can call him "The Greatest" if you want to, but just don't call him "The Most Mature." Muhammad Ali acts about one-sixth of his age as he gives his daughter Laila rabbit ears following her June victory over Erin Toughill in Washington, D.C. Just after this picture was snapped, the legendary heavyweight champ followed up with a noogie and a wedgie, then drew a moustache on Laila after she fell asleep.

NOSTALGIA CORNER



Hmm ... it looks like a duck ... and it sounds like a duck ... so Alfredo Escalera has concluded that it must be a duck. The 1970s WBC super featherweight king proves he's a real quack-up as he carries around this fine-feathered friend. We bet he wishes he could've lived up to his friend's name and done a little more ducking in his two losing bouts with the great Alexis Arguello.

NEW FACES

LAMONT PETERSON

Junior Welterweight

By Mike Greenhill

PHOTO BY MIKE GREENHILL

PRO RECORD

2004		
Sept. 25	Toris Smith, Memphis, TN	KO 2
Oct. 23	Walter Gilliam, Lula, MS	W 4
Nov. 5	Michael Moss, Tunica, MS	KO 1
Dec. 12	Daniel Craycraft, Washington, D.C	W 4
2005		
Jan. 22	Steve Verdin, Tunica, MS	W 4
Feb. 19	Sheldon Mosley, Lula, MS	KO 2
April 9	Oscar Perez, El Paso, TX	KO 1
April 23	J Cunningham, Tunica	KO 4
April 30	Orlando Jesus Soto, Lula	W 6
May 22	Mikel Williams, Choctaw, MS	W 6
June 18	John Frazier, Memphis, TN	KO 1

FIGHTS	WON	LOST	DRAW	KOs
11	11	0	0	6

"The citizens of poverty are barely out of sight.

The Overlords escape near evening, the people own the night."

The above lyrics from Gil Scott-Heron's 1982 song "Washington, D.C." still ring true today in our nation's capital, particularly on D.C.'s impoverished east side. They are words 22-year-old Lamont Peterson can totally relate to, for he and his family have lived them. As a child, the highly touted junior welterweight prospect constantly wondered not only where the next meal would come from, but when the next roof over his family's head would appear as well.

"It was rough," said Lamont of life with his mother and brother Anthony, now a 23-year-old prospect. "Our dad got on drugs, he lost his job, and then went to jail. We couldn't pay the rent, electric, or water. We lived in shelter homes—and got kicked out of some. We lived on the street for a while. We even slept in abandoned cars. One time we snuck into the local Greyhound bus station to spend the night. Later that night, a guard asked for our bus ticket, and since we didn't have one, we got kicked out of the station. Many nights we'd just walk the streets until the sun came up."

The Peterson boys ended up in foster

(Continued on page 71)

BOXING FIGHT POSTERS, PROGRAMS, ART PRINTS, T-SHIRTS, PHOTOS & AUTOGRAPHS

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(Single Gloves, Guaranteed Authentic)

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WITH WRIGHT FIRING ON ALL PISTONS...

A dejected-looking Trinidad gets ready to go out for another frustrating round against Wright (below), who handed the Puerto Rican icon a boxing lesson throughout their 12-rounder on HBO Pay-Per-View. "Tito's" biggest problem was that he couldn't get past Wright's southpaw jab (opposite page).

PHOTOS BY WILL HART/HBO

By David Mayo

Any career backup plan Felix Trinidad has as he enters Phase II of his boxing retirement certainly would distinguish itself from his first career, wherein abundant punching power created a battering-ram welterweight before lack of creativity exposed a befuddled middleweight.

Trinidad retreated to his island refuge after his virtual shutout loss to Winky Wright, eight figures richer, and proclaiming himself retired again. He owns a rematch clause not even he cares to exercise, because after 12 rounds of futility, a complete strategic overhaul would be necessary to make a return bout any more competitive or entertaining.

There is power, real power, in Team Trinidad. Strategic adjustment just isn't one of them.

Larry Brown knows a few things about strategic adjustments, though he only recently bore witness to Trinidad's hold on Puerto Rico's sports image. Brown coaches basketball's Detroit Pistons, who were in the midst of a tough playoff series against the Indiana Pacers when he summoned his team together to watch Wright-Trinidad on May 14.

What Brown didn't expect was the emotional response his reserve point guard, Carlos Arroyo, had to Trinidad's lopsided loss. Arróyo is Puerto Rico's fifth NBA player and a fixture on its major international teams. He replaced John Stockton as starting point guard for the Utah Jazz until the Pistons acquired him in January. And he grew up idolizing Trinidad.

"I swear, Carlos was crushed that Felix lost," Brown said. "I

TRINIDAD NEVER HAD A CHANCE

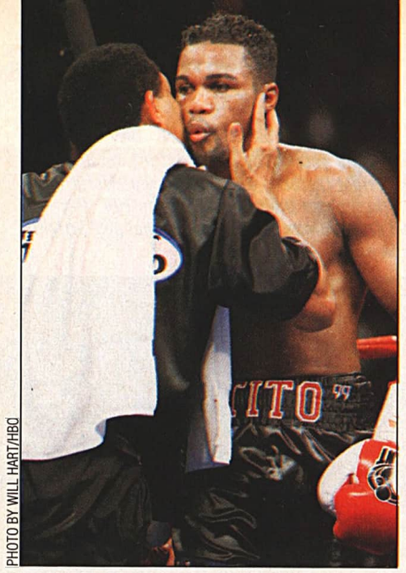

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Felix Trinidad Sr. kisses his son before sending him out for the final round of the Wright fight. Don Felix was widely criticized by the Puerto Rican press for not being able to provide Tito with a more diversified plan of attack. Both father and son retired—again—following the loss.

felt like the only way I could get him out of it was to play him a little bit."

So he did. Arroyo, benched early in the series, snapped out of the funk, played well in three consecutive victories to close out the Pacers, and knocked a couple dents out of Puerto Rico's sporting pride.

And Brown's assessment of Wright-Trinidad? "It didn't look like Felix had a backup plan," the veteran coach said.

That's because there never was one, at least as far as anyone can surmise. Trinidad rarely demonstrated much adaptability because opponents rarely could stand up to his power. But after a tiny group of elite fighters found ways to counteract the same bludgeoning chess move he used for a decade, Tito's craftiness got tested. Turns out it ran the gamut all the way from A to B.

Or maybe not even that far.

What did Shane Mosley say six days after Wright-Trinidad, while appearing as in-studio guest analyst on ESPN's *Friday Night Fights*? He said Trinidad "didn't have a Plan B or C."

What did Bernard Fernandez, the *Philadelphia Daily News* boxing writer who has covered the career of Trinidad's other nemesis, Bernard Hopkins, say?

"Trinidad is sort of a one-trick pony," Fernandez opined. "The thing is that he's so good at that particular trick. But if you force him to Plan B, which not many fighters have been able to do, it becomes difficult for him."

Felix Trinidad Sr. drew the brunt of the criticism. His mid-rounds instructions as his son fell farther and farther behind essentially reduced to three words: Throw more punches. That simplistic attempt at an in-fight adjustment may have worked if Tito ever discovered a way to get inside Wright's jab. He stayed on the end of it instead, with 185 jabs landed by Wright, according to CompuBox, and nary a remedy offered by Trinidad's corner.

One week after the Diego Corrales-Jose Luis Castillo sizzler at Mandalay Bay in Las Vegas, the more hotly anticipated Wright-Trinidad at MGM Grand ended in official blowout margins of 120-107 (Duane Ford), 119-108 (Dave Moretti), and 119-108 (Jerry Roth) in Wright's favor. Within 24 hours, Trinidad was back in Puerto Rico, where he announced his second retirement, citing a decision by his father to retire from his corner. Whatever dynamics were at play in those decisions, the elder Trinidad did not work his son's last fight without criticism, if it indeed was a career finale.

Las Vegas trainer Miguel Diaz was working in Puerto Rico with the island's rising future star, Miguel Cotto, when Wright beat Trinidad. Diaz was taken aback by the unprecedented local media criticism of Team Trinidad's game plan—or lack of one.

"All the knowledgeable writers here in Puerto Rico, the ones who really know the sport, they destroyed the father, crucified him, cut him to pieces," Diaz said. "But that's boxing."

Diaz was surprised only by the ease of Wright's victory. He picked Wright from the moment the fight was made, believing that Wright could outbox and outmaneuver the stationary Trinidad—though even those characteristics proved hardly necessary—against a majority that contended Trinidad might be too big and strong.

Trinidad clearly fought the wrong opponent in the Wright fight, and it seemed no one, including the loser, wanted the rematch clause exercised. And with even less probability of anyone wanting to see Hopkins-Trinidad II in late-summer or early-autumn, as originally planned, the money pool into which Trinidad dipped handsomely during his two-fight comeback runs much shallower now.

Just in case Trinidad is tempted to retract his most recent retirement announcement, Diaz warned that he is too regimented now to change, regardless who works his corner.

"He's 32 years old and he's been boxing 20 years," Diaz said. "There are no adjustments to make. He is what he is."

A decade ago, as a Tysonesque welterweight, Trinidad often had opponents mentally beaten before the opening bell. Bob Every, who worked opposite Team Trinidad in a 1995 welterweight title fight, suggested that's what happened to his fighter, Roger Turner, whose second-round knockout loss was the second-briefest title bout of Trinidad's career. Only Trinidad's first title defense, a one-round blitz of Luis

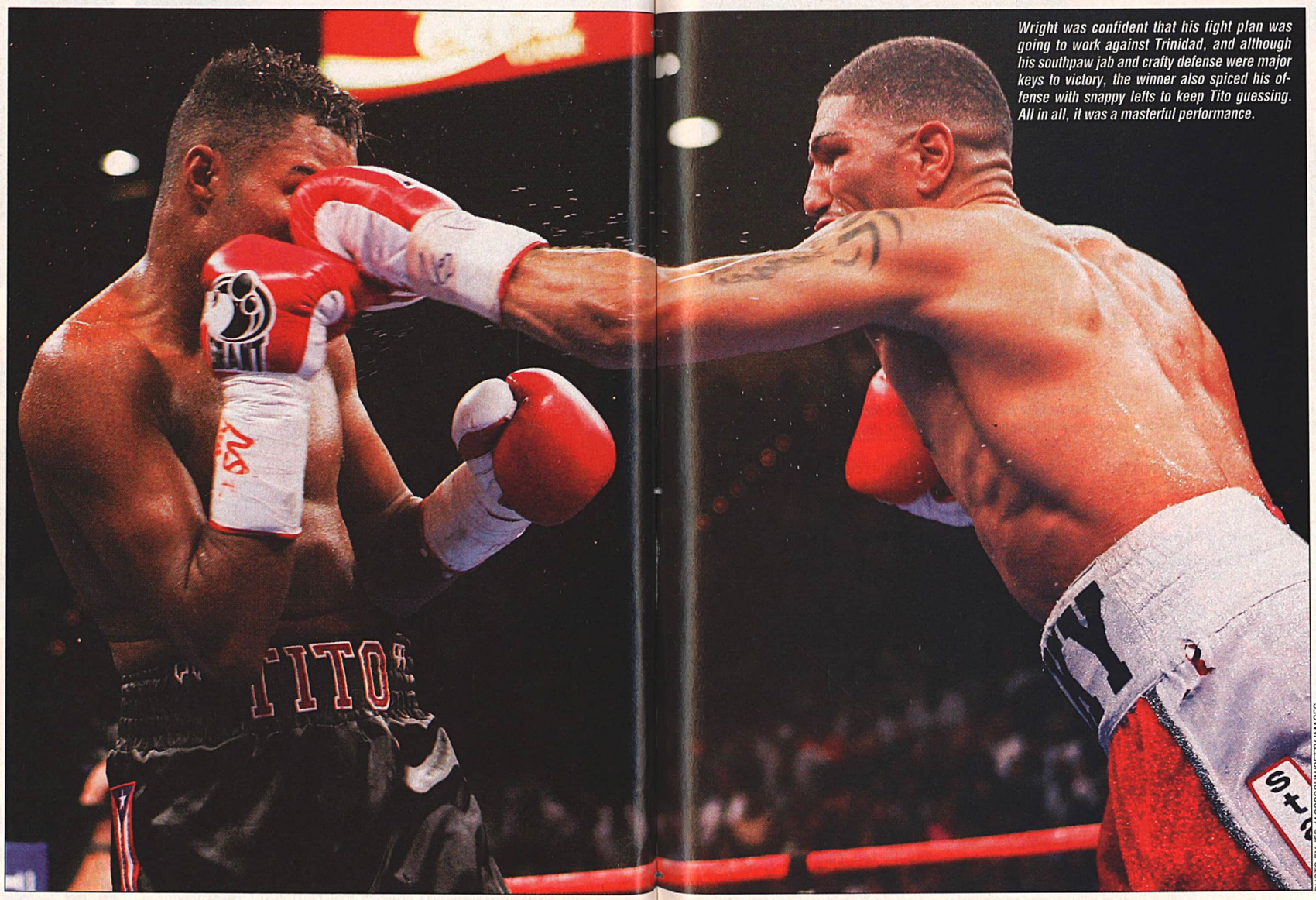

PHOTO BY JED JACOBSOHN/GETTY IMAGES

Wright was confident that his fight plan was going to work against Trinidad, and although his southpaw jab and crafty defense were major keys to victory, the winner also spiced his offense with snappy lefts to keep Tito guessing. All in all, it was a masterful performance.

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Wright's impressive victory keeps him in the mix for additional big paydays. Success has been a long time coming for the 33-year-old veteran, and after 15 years as a pro, he's finally cashing in, thanks to a style that has allowed him to peak relatively late in his athletic life.

Gabriel Garcia in 1993, went shorter.

"Admittedly, Roger Turner against Felix Trinidad was like a nag against Secretariat," Every said. "But back then, Trinidad was really becoming an icon. When you got in there with him, you had to deal with the demons running around in your head that tell you that you have to be very fortunate to win. But once that armor is pierced, and vulnerability is exposed, you're never the same. Hopkins started it all by slapping him around. If reputation is what you've got going for you, and you get in there with a Bernard Hopkins who doesn't care about your reputation and just fights his fight, you're in trouble."

That also happened against Wright, though it clearly has taken two superior fighters to expose Trinidad's faults.

Yet for all his achievements, Trinidad had a sketchy stay at middleweight, losing two of five fights when he stepped up to 160. His victories came against William Joppy, who subsequently was reduced to grabbing yearly paydays; Hassine Cherifi, in what was designed as Trinidad's farewell to boxing in 2002; then a comeback win over Ricardo Mayorga after a layoff of nearly 29 months, in what has to be considered a tailor-made fight for Trinidad in retrospect.

Trinidad, 42-2 (35), has fought four future Hall of Famers, defeating an aged Pernell Whitaker in 1999, followed by brow-raising outcomes in his other competition leaps—Oscar De La Hoya's slam-it-in-reverse 1999 loss in Trinidad's last welterweight bout, and the disastrous results against Hopkins and Wright.

Trinidad received a $10-million-per-fight minimum guarantee from Don King for his comeback, so that was considerable incentive in itself to end Phase I of his retirement. However, since his stated intent for coming back was to avenge his 12th-round knockout loss to Hopkins in 2002, the Wright fight harkens the question of why Trinidad would follow a safe fight against the limited Mayorga with such a risky and highly skilled opponent as Wright.

The answer is academic now, particularly with the Hopkins-Jermain Taylor winner such an obvious natural to face Wright, in place of the original Hopkins-Trinidad proposal.

"We had a game plan for Trinidad," Wright said. "I stayed away from his hook and I kept popping the jab, then hit-

ting him with big shots behind the jab. I knew the game plan would work. I knew I could make it work. Trinidad can take the rematch if he wants. I'd be happy to fight him again. But if the rematch doesn't happen, I want to fight the winner of Hopkins-Taylor."

Wright, 49-3 (25), of St. Petersburg, Florida, differs significantly from Trinidad in that his best wins have come late in his career, against Mosley twice in 2004 and now Trinidad. Hopkins would face a fighter far closer to his prime in the 33-year-old Wright than he would have against the younger Trinidad.

How Hopkins-Wright would sell, and whether it could generate the income to satisfy both fighters' purse demands, is a separate but intertwined issue.

Wright-Trinidad produced 510,000 buys and $25.5-million in pay-per-view revenue. Whether Hopkins-Wright could generate similar numbers is an open question.

Fernandez, the Boxing Writers Association of America president, said he spoke with Hopkins in the aftermath of Wright-Trinidad, and the middleweight champion expressed reservation about the marketability of a fight with Wright.

One might argue that if Wright-Trinidad produced solid pay-per-view numbers, but Hopkins-Wright would not, then the diminished marketability is attributable to the subtraction of Trinidad and addition of Hopkins. Hopkins, as one might guess, computed that equation without arriving at the same total. Fernandez said Hopkins was suspicious about Wright's ability to produce television and purse numbers capable of keeping both sizzling-hot fighters happy.

"Read into this what you will, though Hopkins isn't afraid of anybody," Fernandez said. "But he said he isn't interested in the Winky fight. It wasn't that he thinks Winky isn't worthy, because that would be ridiculous after what Winky has accomplished. But Hopkins said he thought if Trinidad won, he could ask for $20-million, and get maybe $12- or $13-million for the rematch, whereas he may get only $4- to $5-million for fighting Winky. So Hopkins' position, after the Taylor fight, is that he'll go on to fight the winner of the Glen Johnson-Antonio Tarver rematch."

The mathematics of Taylor-Wright, in the event the young lion upsets the veteran champion in July, could prove easier to sum up to everyone's satisfaction, simply because neither side would be working with Hopkins, much less under his self-imposed 41st-birthday retirement deadline in January 2006.

Still, if Hopkins beats Taylor, and chooses to await a light heavyweight title shot while keeping his retirement vow, he voluntarily cuts his remaining career paydays in half. While never one to accept short dollars quietly, that portion of Hopkins' deliberation seems fairly simple. And when pondering the middleweight landscape after Taylor, who could be righter than Wright?

Fernandez questioned how two counterpunching defensive old-schoolers might look like in a ring together, suggesting Hopkins-Wright could prove a "snoozefest" in which neither consistently penetrated the other's guard. Diaz, who correctly nailed his Wright-Trinidad prediction, also found cause for pause in pondering Hopkins-Wright.

"It's going to be a fight," Diaz said. "That's the fight that should be made. Hopkins is very smart, but not a great mover. And Winky has a very difficult style, as Trinidad found out. That would be a different level for Winky. But if it happens, it's a fight."

Which is certainly something that could not be said about Wright-Trinidad. ■

David Mayo covers boxing for the Grand Rapids (Michigan) Press and is a regular contributor to this magazine.

PHOTO BY AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

Wright wants to fight the winner of the Bernard Hopkins-Jermain Taylor fight, but "The Executioner," pictured stopping Trinidad in 2001, isn't sure a match between Wright and himself would generate the sort of money he's looking for prior retiring in January 2006.

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Spring 2005—Svelter Welter: Moving To 147 Will Tip The Scale In Oscar's Favor. Also: Vitali Klitschko, Glen Johnson, Andre Ward, Johnny Persol.

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A Critical Analysis

IS THERE HOPE FOR THE HEAVYWEIGHT DIVISION?

PHOTO BY PAUL J. RICHARDSON/GETTY IMAGES

By Don Stradley

After losing to Kevin McBride in June, Mike Tyson said, "There comes a time in your life where you really don't care about this business no more and it's time for the younger guys to do it."

The only problem is that there aren't many young heavyweights out there who can grab our attention the way Tyson did. How weak is the division? If Tyson had beaten McBride, he'd have automatically become a player based on his name value alone. If the other heavyweights didn't like Tyson vaulting over them in the title sweepstakes, they'd have only themselves to blame. They can't keep their own asses off the canvas, and they can't put asses in the seats.

New fans might not believe it, but there was a time when a heavyweight championship fight had the same atmosphere as the Super Bowl. But in those days a heavyweight was an agile athlete weighing about 210 pounds. Since then, the heavyweights have grown bigger, slower, and lazier. The whole sport has suffered for it. No wonder *The Contender* was cast with middleweights. NBC wouldn't dare use the lugs currently competing at heavyweight.

We're so desperate for a good heavyweight that Lamon Brewster's one-round blowout of Andrew Golota in May sent the experts into hyperbolic overdrive: HBO's Larry Merchant spun a hopeful monolog about Jack Dempsey; eggheads with Internet columns compared Brewster to the

The moribund heavyweight division took another hit in June when Mike Tyson quit in his fight with Irish journeyman Kevin McBride (opposite page). The situation hasn't been helped by the fact that world champion Vitali Klitschko has been injured and hasn't fought since stopping Danny Williams in November 2004 (below).

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Lamon Brewster walks away from Andrew Golota after scoring the second of three knockdowns en route to a first-round knockout victory in May. The spectacular blowout has boosted Brewster's image and could lead to a shot at Klitschko.

vintage Tyson. Never mind that Golota was a timid opponent who considered leaving the arena prior to the fight; Brewster's performance perked up a division in decline. But remember, Bonecrusher Smith used to have a good night once in a while too. Brewster, despite his victory over the "Foul Pole," is just another inconsistent big man. In fact, "inconsistent" is the buzzword for today's heavyweight. And it doesn't take long for them to reveal their shortcomings.

Not long ago Fres Oquendo, Dominick Guinn, Jameel McCline, and Kirk Johnson were highly regarded heavyweight prospects. Now they're struggling. And look at this elephant's graveyard of journeymen: Lance Whitaker, Oleg Maskaev, Ross Puritty, Drake Thadzi, Danell Nicholson, Charles Shufford, Gary Bell, and Clifford Etienne. Not a gallery of superstars, right? But every member of this second group can claim a victory over someone currently ranked in THE RING's Top 10 heavyweights. Perhaps that means our Top 10 is made up of battle-tested veterans who have been around. Or maybe it means inconsistency is everywhere in the division, even among the elite.

The fellows on the scrap heap should be inspired by the July battle between Hasim Rahman and Monte Barrett. Both fighters were written off a few years ago, but the winner was allegedly in line to fight RING champion and WBC titleholder Vitali Klitschko. While both pugs are inconsistent—Rahman has an unreliable chin, while Barrett, who has been through seven trainers and nearly that many managers, isn't sure if he's a boxer or a banger—either guy would be a step up from Klitschko's last challenger, Danny Williams. That is, if Klitschko agrees to fight the winner in the first place. At press time, the champ seemed more interested in fighting the suddenly marketable Brewster.

"I have heard and read where Brewster has challenged me, and there is no problem," said Klitschko. "He looked good against Golota and I would love to fight him. He fought against my brother, so there is added incentive for me. Have his promoter call my manager. I am ready for a September fight."

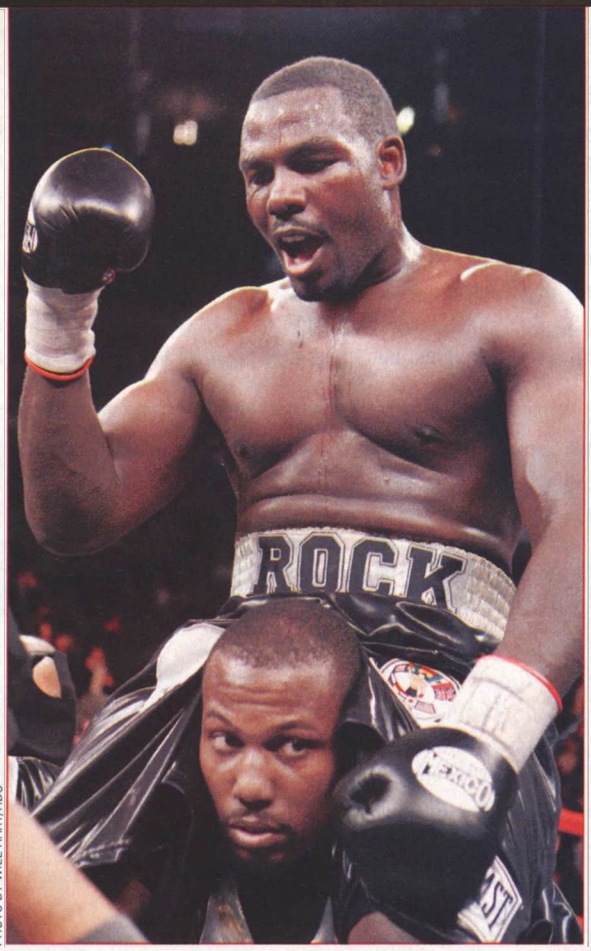
Although Brewster, 33-2 (28), is made of stronger stuff than Williams, he was decked and badly wobbled in the two fights previous to beating Golota. Vitali probably sees him as the sort of face-first, easy-to-hit fighter he feasts on.

Klitschko, 35-2 (34), also knows Brewster will never be as bankable as he is right now. Just as Klitschko more-or-less hand-picked Williams last year due to Williams' win over Tyson, the champ is once again choosing to fight the most visible heavyweight of the moment. That's smart on Klitschko's part. If Brewster takes another fight, and looks bad, or perhaps loses, Vitali loses a payday. Meanwhile, neither Rahman

nor Barrett is particularly bankable right now, so it behooves Klitschko to make them wait. Rahman, especially, could do with some time to market himself. The talkative ex-champ needs to remind us of why we used to like him. In fact, all of the heavyweights could do with some public relations work.

Chris Byrd is the division's longest reigning current alphabet titlist, having won the IBF belt in December 2002. But in that time he's done nothing to engage us. A rematch with Klitschko is what Byrd wants most. But despite the fact that Klitschko, who had handled Byrd for eight rounds, succumbed to a shoulder injury in their first encounter, boxing fans aren't exactly screaming for a sequel. Byrd, 38-1-1 (20) doesn't understand why he's not a star.

"If you liked Muhammad Ali, you should like me," Byrd once said. The difference is that Ali floated like a butterfly; Byrd is more like a common housefly. Young fighters are still trying to imitate Ali's pretty moves. Can you imagine anyone imitating Byrd's pawing style? We doubt it. For that matter, can you imagine a young fighter being inspired by John Ruiz? How would one go about imitating Ruiz, anyway? Would you just wrap your arms around your sparring partner while your trainer hollered that the fix was in?



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Ruiz, 41-5-1 (28) with 1 no-decision, should be a professional wrestler, and not just because of his rough-and-tumble style. Fans boo him. He retains his alphabet title on bogus technicalities. His trainer is a loudmouth. When the WBA reinstated him as titleholder after his conqueror, James Toney, tested positive for steroids, Ruiz taunted us by saying, "To all the assholes who wanted me out of the game, I'm back!" Spoken like a true heel. Ironically, if Ruiz

Former champion Hasim Rahman is back in the title hunt, but a scheduled crack at reigning champ Klitschko morphed into a bout a with Monte Barrett for the WBC's so-called "interim" title when "Dr. Iron Fist" withdrew to have back surgery in April.

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

IBF titleholder Chris Byrd spears Jameel McCline with a right to the face in their November 2004 fight at Madison Square Garden in which Byrd tallied his third successful defense. Despite being the only man to beat champion Klitschko, interest in a rematch appears to be lukewarm.

were merely a contender, we might like him the way we used to like guys like Chuck Wepner and Tex Cobb. But since Ruiz keeps making big paydays, he's lost whatever underdog appeal he might have had. There's some talk that Ruiz may fight Brewster. That's a risk for Brewster. Watching Ruiz fight may be about as fun as getting a lap dance from Bob Arum, but Ruiz doesn't buckle like Golota.

If Toney, 68-4-2 (43) with 1 no-decision, had fought Ruiz in a state that didn't have steroid testing, we might be heralding Toney as a real force in the division. Instead, their fight took place in New York and Toney was busted. Now, at 37, Toney's future is not as bright as he might have hoped. He can't waste any more time on food binges, tantrums, or dope scandals. We would like to see Toney try his old-school skills against any of the top heavyweights, but some aren't sure if Toney can regain the form that has twice made him THE RING's Fighter of the Year.

"He combines the best and worst in boxing," said HBO's Jim Lampley. "He has tremendous skills, but he's only fighting at heavyweight because now he can eat whatever he wants and can still make millions of dollars. We also haven't seen him against a young, hard-punching heavyweight. It's one thing to use your hand speed against John Ruiz, but let's

TYSON SAYS *NO MAS* TO McBRIDE AND BOXING

The man who trained Mike Tyson during his heyday, Kevin Rooney, was asked for a prediction prior to Tyson's June 11 bout with Kevin McBride. He said Tyson would beat McBride and eventually defeat world champion Vitali Klitschko. "By then Mike will have made a hundred million dollars and he can do whatever he wants," said Rooney.

Rooney, like so many Tyson loyalists, was living in the past. Freddie Roach, who trained Tyson more recently, said McBride would win if he survived the early rounds. Roach was right; Tyson's newest trainer, Jeff Fenech, decided Tyson had nothing left after the sixth round and stopped the fight, making McBride the second consecutive long shot to beat Tyson inside the distance.

But Tyson, 50-6 (44) with 2 no-contests, had fallen so far that it didn't even feel like an upset.

"I'm not an animal anymore," Tyson said, explaining his plans to quit the sport and focus on missionary work. "I felt like I was 120 years old."

For a guy who sounded like he wanted to get as far from the business as possible, Tyson, 233, looked half-decent during the opening round as the 15,472 in attendance cheered him on. But by round two he was nervously biting his gloves, unsure of how to deal with the man-mountain in front of him. He had threatened to "gut" McBride "like a fish." But how do you handle a fish the size of a house?

McBride, who boasted of having all of Ireland in his fist, showed remarkable poise as he grappled with Tyson and punished him with uppercuts. The Irishman had consulted a hypnotist prior to the fight to combat negative thoughts, and when Tyson connected with a hard left hook in the third, McBride didn't budge; either the hypnosis was working, or Tyson's power had finally deserted him.

The fourth was Tyson's best round. The Washington, D.C., crowd roared as he lashed at McBride's torso, but the mammoth McBride walked through Tyson's punches and continued his strategy of leaning on Tyson and chopping away with his right hand. Late in the fifth, McBride stunned Tyson with a right uppercut followed by a left hook. Had McBride, 271, been a better fighter, he would have stopped Tyson right then.

Instead of going down fighting, Tyson resorted to fouling in the sixth, wrenching McBride's arm during a clinch and then opening a gash on the big man's eyebrow with a deliberate headbutt, drawing a two-point deduction from referee Joe Cortez. Unfazed by Tyson's hooliganism, McBride scrapped with Tyson in mid-ring before forcing him into the ropes and coming down on him like an avalanche. Tyson absorbed a series of short punches that snapped his head around, and at

PHOTO BY PAUL J. RICHARDS/GETTY IMAGES

The towering McBride catches Tyson with a right

see him against better competition."

David Tua could use some better competition too. He looked mediocre in his last fight, a late-round stoppage of trialhorse Talmadge Griffis, but his promoter, Cedric Kushner, will probably try to push Tua into the title picture one last time. Tua, 43-3-1 (38), should be in the same position as Rahman or Barrett. However, inactivity has kept him off of boxing's A-list. But even at this late stage, Tua wouldn't be a bad horse to bet on. He still hits hard enough to melt a guy.

Wladimir Klitschko, 44-3 (40), walks the fine line between contender and has-been. His recent fourth-round knockout of Eliseo Castillo didn't help us forget the problems with his chin, stamina, and mental outlook. Still, we have a flicker of hope for Wlad. At his best he was amazing to watch. Plus, he's the only active heavyweight with a win over Byrd.

Samuel Peter is where Klitschko and Tua were before the cracks in their armor started showing. He seems to have it all: youth, durability, and a knockout punch that borders on sinister. We've noticed Peter becomes cranky if he doesn't knock guys out right away—he's been known to hit guys when they're down or shove them out of the ring. Is that a bad temper? Insecurity? Impatience? Peter, 23-0 (20), was scheduled to fight light-punching Taurus Sykes in

PHOTO BY PAUL J. RICHARDS/GETTY IMAGES

McBride celebrates upset victory with the Irish flag

the round's end he simply collapsed. Cortez correctly ruled it a slip, but "Iron Mike" looked as if he'd had enough. After watching Tyson struggle to rise and return to his corner, Fenech called it a night.

Fans pelted Tyson with garbage as he made his way to his dressing room. He wearily gave the crowd the finger before ducking into the bowels of the M.C.I. Center. That final gesture said more than all of his postfight verbiage about feeding Bosnians.

"I want to thank all the mothers of Ireland for lighting holy candles for me," said McBride, 33-4-1 (27). He also thanked his trainer, Goody Petronelli, who once handled Marvelous Marvin Hagler and seemed happy to be in a big fight atmosphere. He thanked his late father, who had inspired him to follow his dreams. And last but not least, he thanked his hypnotist, Patrick Brady.

McBride earned a reported $150,000 for his work; Tyson pocketed a cool $5-million, which barely makes a dent in what he owes his creditors. The man who stands to benefit the most from the fight is Brady. There's money to be made meeting with Tyson fans to snap them out of the trance they've been in since 1990. That is, if watching Tyson lose to a journeyman didn't do the trick.

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PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

It looked like James Toney had advanced significantly in the heavyweight derby when he outpointed WBA titleholder John Ruiz, but when Toney tested positive for steroids, the decision was changed to no-contest and the WBA strap reverted back to Ruiz.

July, but we'd like to see him meet stronger opponents this year, perhaps a McCline or an Oquendo. He'd also benefit from the tactic Bill Cayton and Jim Jacobs used to hype Tyson in his early days: Fight often, whack out some stiffs in between tougher assignments, and show those dramatic knockouts on the nightly news.

Peter's biggest hurdle may be that he seems like a foreign exchange student trying to fit in at a high school dance. Unless he improves his English and shows some personality, American fans may view him as just another weird fighter from Africa. Of course, he might stir up interest in the Nigerian communities the way Klitschko inspires his Ukrainian fans. Either way, a heavyweight with Peter's kind of punch doesn't disappear without leaving an imprint on the division.

Former Olympian Calvin Brock, 25-0 (20), survived a knockdown last April to outpoint McCline in Las Vegas. Brock has some ability. And unlike many fighters in the class, he's not dull. His camp will probably move him carefully until Brock can meet the least threatening of the alphabet titlists. If Brock and Peter remain undefeated, we may be in for something special when they meet in the future. That's a fight Peter's promoter, Dino Duva, has already talked about. Brock's first step should be to lose his nickname: "The Boxing Banker" will look ridiculous on fight posters against "The Nigerian Nightmare."

Meanwhile, Vitali Klitschko remains the focal point of the division, and not only because THE RING recognizes him as champion. Much of the boxing public accepts him too. When boxing Web sites offer surveys to name the true heavyweight boss, the big Ukrainian usually grabs as much as 70 percent of the votes. Usually, a fighter who replaces a retired champ isn't embraced right away, but Klitschko, who has filled in the vacancy left by Lennox Lewis' retirement, is a rarity in that he not only faced the former champ, but actually fought him to a standstill before losing on cuts.

But does a recent leg injury followed by back surgery mean Klitschko's big body is already breaking down? Let's hope not, because he seems to relish being the champion. Even if his Las Vegas debut against Williams didn't draw well, his New York and Los Angeles appearances were successful. Klitschko also has plenty of challengers waiting, even if his longtime dream of fighting Tyson is finally squelched for good. For many heavyweights, watching Tyson crash and burn against McBride must have been like seeing a winning lottery ticket flushed down the toilet. A 39-year-old Tyson, had he worked his way to a title shot, was still the biggest payday out there.

The current group may not measure up against the Hall of Fame lineup of the 1970s, but there are reasons we should feel positive. Maybe Brock will blossom. Maybe Tua will get it right this time. Maybe Rahman has one more right

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Barrett (left) exposed previously unbeaten prospect Dominick Guinn and handed him his first defeat via 12-round decision in March 2004 (pictured). Barrett followed up by stopping Owen Beck, another previously undefeated up-and-comer.

hand to throw. Maybe Wladimir Klitschko will live up to his potential. Maybe Toney and Byrd will have an all-Michigan showdown. Maybe we'll get a bombs-away thriller involving Brewster vs. Peter. Maybe McBride has another good fight in him. Maybe there's a dark horse out there we don't know about. And while this group is admittedly weak, the fighters are better than the inferior bunch Tyson dominated in the late-'80s, and they're certainly better than Joe Louis' Bum of the Month Club.

It will be interesting to see how the division shapes up now that they are free of Tyson's shadow, for even as his skills diminished, Tyson maintained a grip on the weight class, or at least the public's perception of it. Obviously, some fans will no longer watch boxing now that Tyson's gone, but perhaps people who had been turned off by him will now be curious to see who else is around. Will the remaining heavyweights make a grab for the spotlight?

Let's hope they do. Boxing junkies may follow the smaller weight classes, but the average American sports fan won't follow fighters the size of jockeys. If the heavyweights can't get it together, this sport can kiss the mainstream goodbye. ■

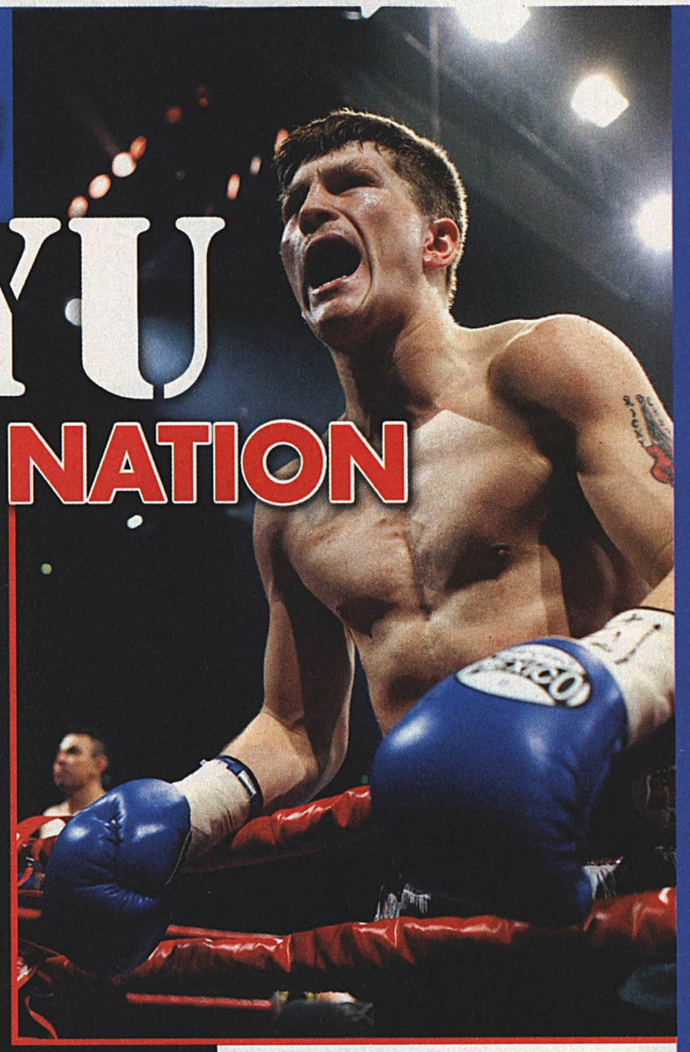
Don Stradley is a freelance writer from Rockport, Massachusetts, and a regular contributor to this magazine.

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

A lot of folks are excited by Nigerian slugger Samuel Peter, pictured en route to a fifth-round knockout of Yanqui Diaz. There's no doubt that Peter has the punch to go all the way, but other facets of his game have yet to be proven. A showdown with Calvin Brock would be a good test for both.

WORKING-CLASS WARRIOR BECOMES KING OF BRITISH BOXING

HATTON'S DEFEAT OF TSZYU THRILLS A NATION



Showing no fear whatsoever, Hatton took the fight to Tszyu from the start and never stopped coming until the defending champion quit on his stool after the 11th round. Upon learning that Tszyu had capitulated and that he was the new junior welterweight champion, Hatton leaped up on the ropes and joined the capacity crowd celebrating his remarkable victory.

By Brian Doogan

PHOTOS BY JOHN GICHIGI/GETTY IMAGES

It was 3 a.m. in Manchester and a great warrior king sat slumped on his throne. Billy Graham, one of the men conspiring to have him overthrown, looked hard into the eyes of the young prince whose time had come and told him that the crown was his. "But you need this last round to make sure," he warned. "I know you're knackered, but can you give me three more minutes?" The response he got was emphatic: "Damn right I can."

Across the ring, these words echoed eerily. Johnny Lewis, a member of the king's court from his earliest conquests, looked for some kind of response, a small indication that all was not lost. But all he could elicit from a man whose mantra

Hatton's battle plan was to set a demanding pace, stay right on top of Tszyu, and never give him an opportunity to find the range or tempo that he wanted. The tactic worked to perfection and propelled Hatton to the most significant win by a British fighter on British soil since Barry McGuigan beat Eusebio Pedroza in 1985 to win the WBA featherweight title.

reads *vincit qui se vincit* (he conquers who conquers himself) were a couple of forlorn shakes of the head. The battle, and the king's long reign, was over.

Inside the cauldron-like MEN Arena, where an army of 22,000 had been assembled, the celebration of Ricky Hatton's sensational stoppage of Kostya Tszyu was euphoric. This was one of the great nights in the history of British boxing, a night when an old man was reminded of Randolph Turpin ripping the world middleweight title from Sugar Ray Robinson. Others spoke of Henry Cooper's left hook at Wembley, which threatened the hand of history when it floored Cassius Clay, and Barry McGuigan's great triumph over Eusebio Pedroza and Nigel Benn's over the tragic Gerald McClellan were joyously recalled, too, along with great deeds on foreign fields, such as John H. Stracey's defeat of Jose Napoles and Lloyd Honeyghan's stunning upset of Don Curry.

The drama that began with the most passionate rendition of *Blue Moon*, as Manchester's favorite fighting son and the most popular fighter in Britain arrived in the ring, ended with the 26-year-old tearfully embracing his father and mother and his brother, Matthew, a fighter too. And an entire nation rejoiced because Hatton is the quintessential boy-next-door, the ultimate people's champion, to his core one of their own.

"Manchester, I always said I'd be number one and you, my loyal fans, deserve this as much as me. We did it together tonight," said Hatton, microphone in hand, addressing his supporters from the ring. "There's only word to describe your support, and that's 'legendary.' God bless you all, I mean it. And I think you'll agree that if I'm able to be half the champion Kostya Tszyu was, I'll be doing well, so give Kostya a round of applause from me."

Then Tszyu took the mike: "I'm a proud man, a very proud man. I'm not saying this is the end of my career. Maybe it is, maybe not. But I'm saying that today I lost to the better fighter and it's no shame for me to say this. I'm a very strategic fighter. I plan everything and I planned a lot for this fight, but Ricky was better than me in every way. I've been boxing for 27 years, so well done, Ricky. Any help from me, you're always welcome, mate."

As dawn arrived over a city in raptures, the abiding memory was of two fighting men, who had hit one another with their best shots, hitting the perfect climactic note.

Five days later Hatton sat in the games room of his home in Hyde, on the outskirts

Even though Tszyu landed plenty of punches, he was never able to hurt Hatton or slow his furious assault. The 10th and 11th rounds were particularly punishing for Tszyu, but even though he was clearly behind on points, it came as a shock when the Australia-based Russian failed to answer the bell for the final round, surrendering the title while sitting on his stool.

of Manchester, surrounded by memorabilia from his career, and reflected on the fight of his life, a performance that usurped a maestro's and won him the junior welterweight championship of the world. So much had happened even in those five days. He told a story about three Texans, wearing Stetsons and big boots, walking into his local pub on the Monday after the fight, The Prince of Wales in Gorton. "In town for the rodeo?" somebody asked them tongue-in-cheek. "No, we're here for the Ricky Hatton fight," one of them replied. "We were told he might be here." As is customary after every fight, Hatton was at the bar, nursing a pint of beer. They offered to buy him another drink, but Hatton called for three large Jack Daniel's for his American visitors. "I just can't get my head around the fact that people in Texas know me," he said and they laughed.

He told them about meeting Tszyu earlier in the day at the hotel that the Australian-based Russian had stayed in for the previous two weeks. They had embraced warmly, talked about their families, signed souvenirs for one another, and not once did they mention the fight. Hatton presented a small porcelain statue of himself to Tszyu, who reciprocated by handing Hatton a toy kangaroo for his son, Campbell. He's a class act, the old champion, Hatton and his friends from Texas all agreed.

Then for three days Hatton went to Spain, to unwind with some relations and pals. The response of British holidaymakers wherever he was spotted was like nothing he had encountered before.

"I actually had to leave a little Chinese restaurant without having eaten one bite because I was just inundated with people looking for my autograph and looking to say, 'Well done,'" he revealed. "Not that I'm complaining. I'm so proud that they enjoyed the fight that much." When he watched it for the first time on the Thursday night in Linekers Bar in Puerto Banus, people all around him chanted his name and slapped his sunburnt shoulders. "He's a force of nature in there," roared the commentator. Hatton's bright blue eyes did not leave the TV screen.

"The fight went exactly as I thought it would," he said back at his home in Hyde. "I had to stick to him like glue and I did. That was my plan, to keep him working, to push him, maul him, lean on him, sap his energy, even if it meant losing the first six rounds, because I knew the last six would be mine. I could see he was working harder than he wanted to. After seven, eight rounds I thought, *I've got you now*. He didn't expect me to be all over him, not in the slightest bit in awe of him, fearless."

The electricity that flowed throughout the MEN Arena fed Hatton's intensity as he arrived in the ring, pumped up to a degree he had never been before. Repeatedly, he thumped his right hand into his chest. When Tszyu emerged into what promoter Frank

British referee Dave Parris raises Hatton's arm in victory as promoter Frank Warren consoles loser Tszyu. The official scores after 11 completed rounds were 107-102 (Don Akerman), 106-103 (Alfredo Asaro), and 105-104 (Manuel Maritaxalar), all in favor of the Hatton.

Warren described as "the lion's den," he skipped over the top rope and raised his right fist in defiance, the right hand with which he had softened and stopped 25 of his 31 victims in 33 fights (he had been beaten once previously by Vince Phillips and engaged in one no-contest). He had proven himself the best in his division, a weight class that boasts the deepest talent pool in boxing, against men like Zab Judah, now the world welterweight champion, and former light welterweight king Julio Cesar Chavez of Mexico whose countrymen, 18,000 of them, screamed like savages, "Matale," which means, "Kill him." Tszyu had ransacked the division in the most hostile environments, a conqueror in the mold of Genghis Khan.

But Hatton, 140, faced him like a man possessed, exerting a level of pressure that proved uncomfortable for Tszyu, 140, negating his most devastating weapon, that strong straight right hand. Tszyu required distance for this punch to be most effective, but Hatton gave him none. His jab was strong and he used his physical strength to put Tszyu on the back foot, paying no respect to Tszyu's vaunted power, concentrating on throwing power-packed punches of his own, which seemed to take the champion by surprise. After two rounds of fierce, close-quarter engagement, the aggressive "Hitman" from Hyde had established an early lead. "But I knew there was a long way to go," he confided.

In the third round, Hatton took a hard right hand to his chin, took it well, and came through with another right to the jaw and left hook to the stomach. By the fourth round it was clear that both men were set on a battle of attrition to the very end. Hatton's pace dropped almost imperceptibly. Tszyu's jabs carried added menace and hurt. But Hatton fired back every time Tszyu threatened trouble, landing a good left hook to the body and right hand to the champion's jaw. His own jaw was increasingly tested as he began to get caught with ominous regularity by straight rights, charging in.

"You expect that you're going to get caught with good punches by a fighter of Kostya Tszyu's quality," Hatton declared. "That's the territory. That's what you need to come through if you're going to win."

Hatton came through all right, and by the fifth round, having fought only three times previously in three years, Tszyu appeared to be feeling the pace. Hatton landed solid shots, one left hook driving the champion into the ropes. A powerful right to Tszyu's jaw clearly shook him in the seventh and his retaliation was a low blow that dropped Hatton. Referee Dave Parris gave the challenger time to recover before he was straight back in Tszyu's face. "Closer is safer," was his prefight mantra, and in the most dangerous place in all of sport he was

staying safe and remaining bold.

Hatton showed the experience of an old pro, too, answering Tszyu's persistent low blows with a crude left hook well below the belt line. "Mind games," he reflected, "just a warning to let him know that if he wanted to fight that way, I could too."

The 10th was one of Hatton's best rounds of the fight as he came through a big left hook at the start of the round and fired a steady succession of heavy, accurate blows that might have finished a lesser man than Tszyu. An overhand right and two right uppercuts inflicted real damage on the champion. Soon it all became too much for Tszyu. A right-left-right at the end of the 11th round and two right uppercuts drained him of whatever resistance remained. Tszyu, 31-2 (25) with 1 no-decision, could not rise from his stool for the 12th and final round, and it was bedlam as the fans acclaimed the winner of one of the most incredible fights ever waged in a British ring. Hatton, 39-0 (28), had won because he managed to break the spirit of this warrior king.

"I could feel him slowing from the seventh or eighth round," Hatton said. "His punches were still solid, but he was starting to breathe heavy. His mouth was open. Kostya's a very patient fighter who likes to fight at his own pace, and because most of his opponents are so intimidated by his power, like Zab Judah was and Sharmba Mitchell, he's generally able to do so. But I never let him, and he must have thought: *You're a rum so-and-so, Ricky*. He just didn't think I could keep up that pace and intensity.

"Because I was on him so quickly in every round, he was never able to land his right hand where his bite is. I kept the distance between us close and rode his shots, took the sting out of them. He never really caught me flush. At the start of every round he fired the right because he knew it was the only time he had that bit of distance that he revels in. But I surprised him with my physical strength. He's never had to cope with that before. Everyone has tended to box in fear of him and backed away. I could feel the power in his stinging, hard punches, but he could have hit me with me a mallet and I still wouldn't have been denied. I don't think I took a backward step the whole fight."

Russell Crowe, the Academy Award-winning actor who played Maximus in *Gladiator* and Jimmy Braddock in *The Cinderella Man*, came to Hatton's dressing room and told Hatton: "I never thought I'd see anyone stop Kostya Tszyu the way you did."

"There's incredible talent in this division, and Ricky will now get even better. That's what happens when a fighter becomes champion," said his promoter, Frank Warren. "Ricky's just beaten the number-one guy, a man considered to be one of the best 140-pound fighters in history, and he's approaching his peak at 26. Suddenly, everybody's looking to fight him because he's the champion and there are great fights out there, against Diego Corrales, Miguel Cotto, Floyd Mayweather, Arturo Gatti, and Vivian Harris. These are some of the best matches that can be made in any division in the sport today. Kostya Tszyu was recognized as the man, setting the standard all the other light welterweights in the world had to aspire to. Now the man is Ricky Hatton."

Hatton is a man completely unaffected by his newfound stardom. Stood in his games room, his focus fell on a display containing the gloves he wore on the September night in 1997 when he made his professional debut against Colin "Kid" McAuley in Widnes, which he won by first- round stoppage. The dedication from his trainer, Billy Graham, who presented him with this memento two days before he faced Tszyu, read: "First day I saw you, I knew this day would come. Luv Yer, Billy."

"Flippin' heck, we've come a long way," Hatton mused.

And the journey is far from done. ■

Brian Doogan, THE RING's European correspondent, was ringside in Manchester for the Hatton-Tszyu fight.

Despite their fierce ring rivalry, Tszyu and Hatton had a lot of mutual respect and admiration for one another. Afterward, the classy warriors exchanged kind words to a sincere show of friendship. While challengers are lining up for a crack at the new champ, Tszyu's career could be over.

Trumping The Memories Of Past Lightweight Wars

CORRALES-CASTILLO

CREATE AN EPIC FOR THE AGES

Corrales celebrates his miraculous, up-from-the-floor TKO of Castillo in what many are calling the greatest lightweight fight of all-time. Both men absorbed tremendous punishment before the challenger prevailed in the 10th round of an unforgettably savage encounter.

PHOTOS BY NICK LAHAM/GETTY IMAGES

By Brian Doogan

"I'm a warrior at heart. It's just what I do. Some people love to fight. Some people love to war. When it gets hard, gets heavy, I'm willing to go through all you can."

—Diego Corrales

On May 7, at the Mandalay Bay in Las Vegas, Diego Corrales had to come through all that a man can. Through nine rounds of a brutally compelling lightweight title fight, reigning champion Jose Luis Castillo and Corrales shared all the sufferings of war, the wounds, the pain, the hopelessness, savagery, and insanity. Suddenly, in the 10th round, it reached an end. Twice the lanky American was felled by blows that penetrated his bones and went straight to his soul. His fight seemed over. But the intensity of what had gone before had summoned ghosts and now it was as if one of them spoke.

"Can't never quit in a ring," Beau Jack, the most enduring of lightweight spirits, always said. His words echoed through the arena as Corrales rose, looked at referee Tony Weeks and Castillo, before stepping forward to join in the dance of the ghosts. Through eyes barely able to see, with arms he could hardly raise, Corrales re-engaged Castillo for the final, sensational act, trading punch for punch and stopping his man along the ropes.

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

Corrales and Castillo stood toe-to-toe throughout most of their scintillating bout. Clinches were few, and referee Tony Weeks had very little to do until the fateful 10th round, when the fight reached its extraordinary climax.

"You have to love people to fight like that," Beau Jack once remarked. Castillo's desire to give the people a fight for the ages was fulfilled at last.

"I've waited a long time to show my will and to prove I'm a warrior," Corrales said after the fight, the purple swellings around his eyes hidden behind dark glasses, his body still in agony. "This was a war of attrition, and I'm a true warrior. When he knocked me down, I knew I'd get up. I still felt like a lion and I punched away until I had him. But the guy earned every bit of my respect. I'll always be a Castillo fan. Now all I want to do is go soak my face. But I'd fight him tomorrow if I had to."

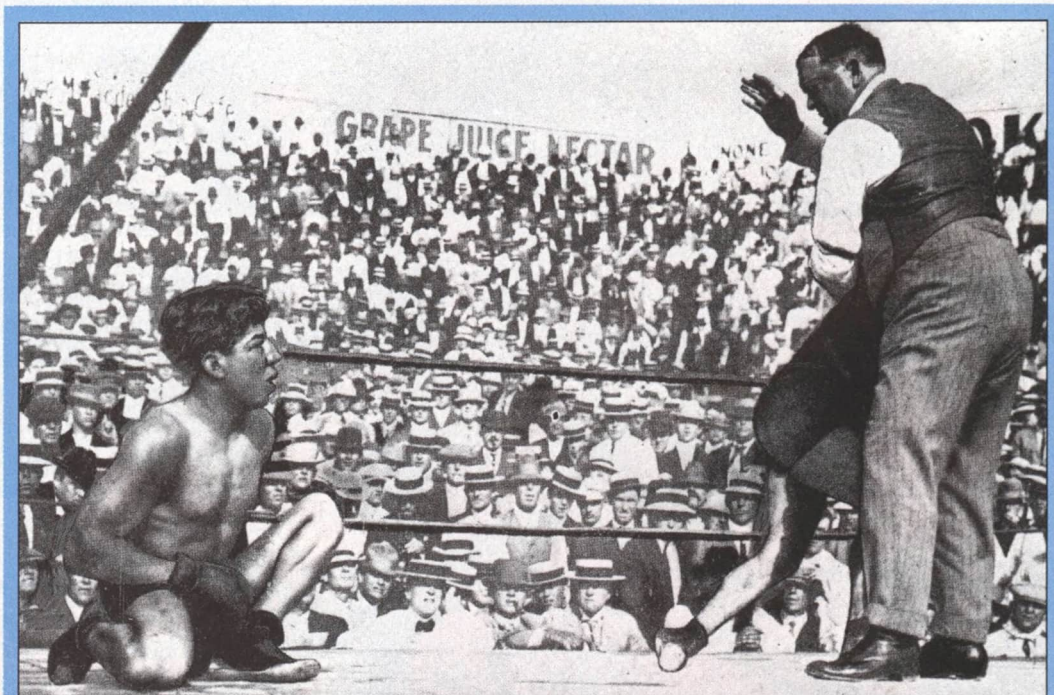
It was to the past, however, that veteran ring watchers felt compelled to look because Corrales-Castillo, which was televised by Showtime, had evoked remembrance of the fiercest wars ever waged at 135 pounds. It had stirred the ghosts of Battling Nelson, Joe Gans, Ad Wolgast, Joe Rivers, Benny Leonard, Tony Canzoneri, Henry Armstrong, Lou Ambers, Beau Jack, Bob Montgomery, Ike Williams, Joe Brown, Roberto Duran, Esteban De Jesus, Alexis Arguello, Ray Mancini, Edwin Rosario, and Livingstone Bramble.

"It was the greatest fight I have seen in my life," declared former WBA lightweight titleholder Jim Watt, who was at ringside commentating for Britain's Sky Sports.

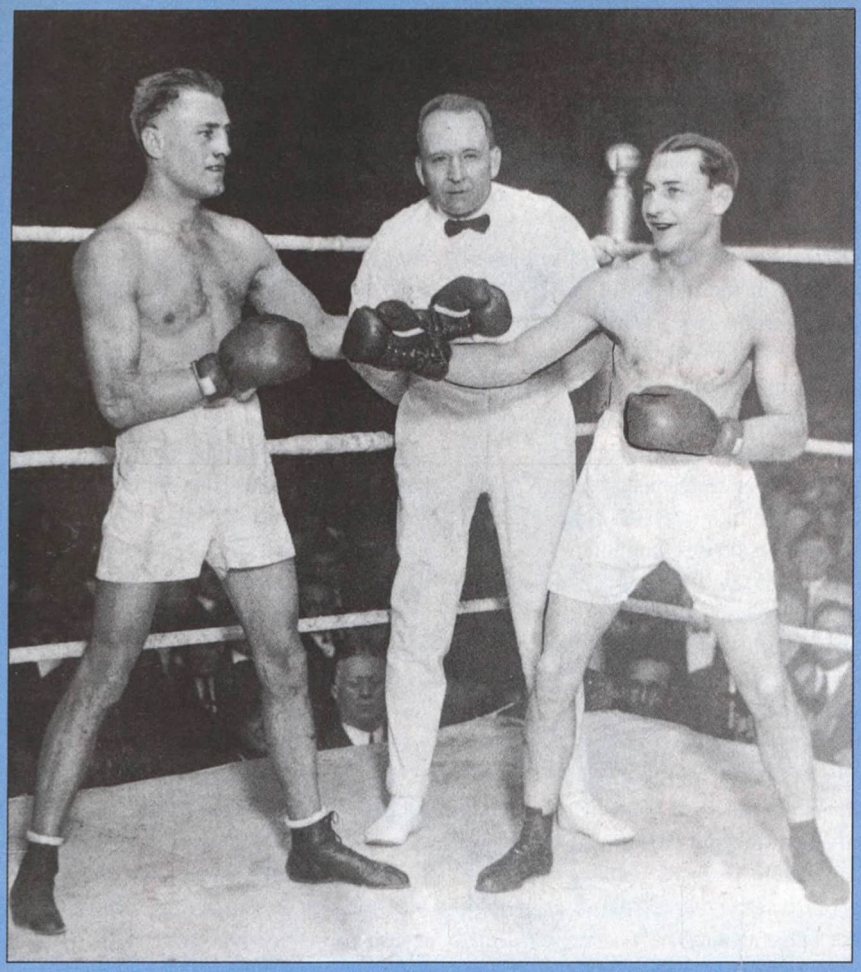
Its fluctuating form and incessant action made it a better fight by far than when Gans was outgunned by Nelson and fell three times in the 17th round before referee Jack Welch counted him out on Independence Day 1908 at the Mission Street Arena in Colma, California. Nelson made two title defenses before he encountered Wolgast who meted out such an accumulation of punishment that referee Ed Smith suggested to Nelson the option of quitting.

"Never," Nelson replied. "Not me."

After absorbing one final right hand in round 40, Nelson was saved by Smith, but



There have been many remarkable lightweight fights in boxing history, including the highly controversial 1912 rumble between champion Ad Wolgast and challenger Joe Rivers. When both fighters went down simultaneously in the 13th round, referee Jack Welch help Wolgast to his feet while counting out Rivers.



Lightweight champion Benny Leonard (left) was all smiles before the start of his 1921 title fight with Willie Richie at Madison Square Garden. But the fight turned out to be no laughing matter when Richie almost kayoed the overconfident champion in the opening round.

continued to claim the title for several years because he hadn't been counted out.

Such was the unyielding nature of Corrales-Castillo, but the difference was the ferocity with which the American and the Mexican competed and the evenness that persisted all the way through. At no point did it become clear which of them would win until the final dramatic salvo.

Wolgast and Rivers certainly produced drama on July 4, 1912, when both went down near the end of the 13th round after Wolgast threw a left into his opponent's groin just as Rivers landed a hook to the jaw. Wolgast was saved by referee Welch, who, incredibly, held him up while counting out Rivers. Still, regardless of the bizarre conclusion, this was not a fight that measured up to Corrales-Castillo, but Leonard against Richie Mitchell at Madison Square Garden in 1921 came close.

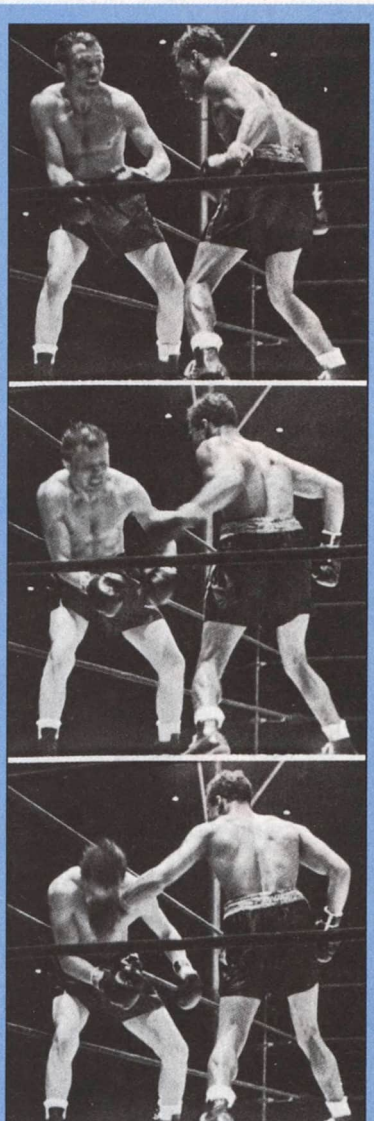
Handsome, articulate, a masterful boxer, Leonard was a vivid symbol of The Roaring Twenties. Before Leonard climbed into the ring to meet Mitchell, notorious gambler Arnold Rothstein backed the champion's prediction that he could knock out his opponent in the opening round, with a $25,000 wager, promising Leonard 10 percent of the action. Leonard's very first punch sent Mitchell to the floor, and within the first minute he had decked him twice more. But in his desperation to finish the fight, Leonard left his chin exposed, was softened by a left hook to the stomach, and flattened by a right-hand haymaker. For Leonard's mother, it was all too much. She fainted before the round was over.

Leonard survived despite sustaining several more Mitchell right hands in the second and third rounds. He seized the initiative again, floored Mitchell three times in the sixth, and retained the title. It was the most dramatic fight in the career of a virtuoso exponent.

Armstrong was another maestro who completed the greatest single accomplishment in the history of boxing when he added the lightweight title to the featherweight and welterweight belts to his collection by beating Ambers in August 1938, becoming the only fighter to hold three world championships simultaneously. Furthermore, he achieved his feat in three of the eight traditional divisions. His bout with Ambers befitted the occasion. A frenetic and fluctuating fight seemed to be slipping away from Armstrong at the end of 10 rounds as he returned to his corner with a torn bottom lip that would require 37 stitches.

"If you spit any more blood on that floor," referee Billy Cavanaugh told him, "I'm going to stop this fight."

Armstrong ordered his cornermen to



Henry Armstrong punishes Lou Ambers on the ropes en route to capturing the lightweight title in 1938. Armstrong, who suffered a badly cut lip, was forced to swallow his own blood so that the referee wouldn't stop the fight.

remove his mouthpiece and swallowed his own blood over the final five rounds, almost blacking out before the bell ending 15 rounds heralded his heroic victory by split decision.

Wars, of course, were Beau Jack's specialty. As a youngster, he had fought in battle royals, an old and sordid tradition in which a group of five to 10 black youths would be blindfolded and sent into the ring for a free-for-all, for the amusement of southern gentlemen. In the second of his four fights with Bob Montgomery, Jack set the pace, averaging more than 100 punches per round before he faded and staggered through the final few rounds to regain the title in the greatest effort of his Hall of Fame career.

Duran, in coming back from defeat to Esteban De Jesus, established his legend, reigning as world champion from 1972 to '79. The second of his three bouts against the highly skilled Puerto Rican was the best. As in their first encounter, De Jesus dropped Duran in the opening round with a left hook, but the Panamanian's power, skill, and indomitable will prevailed in 11 rounds.

So the lightweight division has embraced drama, fluctuating fortunes, and breathtaking, remorseless engagements down through the years. But the night of May 7 stands out as the pinnacle. Not only was it a fight in which both Corrales, 135, Las Vegas, Nevada, and Castillo, 135, Mexicali, Mexico, battled evenly throughout its course, hurting one another, taking the punishment and fighting back, but it culminated in perhaps the most sensational climax in the history of the division when Corrales, twice sent crashing onto his back by Castillo's left hook, dug as far down within himself as it is possible to rally back and stop his foe with 54 seconds of the 10th round remaining.

"I've never seen someone come off the floor to win like Corrales did," reflected Gary Shaw, Corrales' promoter.

From the opening bell this was a special engagement, capturing all the savagery, nobility, and supernatural quality of the ring. Here was pugilism in a prism. Neither man would easily give ground. Corrales, 40-2 (33), ignored his advantages in height and reach to prove his machismo. As with most of the rounds that followed, the first ended with both men trading punches wildly. The 5,168 people in attendance roared as if they were twice as many, a visceral noise that went to the heart of the thrill. Corrales and Castillo, 52-7-1 (46), came out for the next round for more of the same, the Mexican penetrating Corrales' guard with a right uppercut that snapped back his head. More bitter exchanges followed before two left hooks rocked Castillo badly just before the bell.

And so it went, back and forth, round after round, the fight waged at close quarters, the punishment so brutal that the spectacle became almost overwhelming.

"I wanted him to have to tap the tank early," said 27-year-old Corrales. "You pay a little for that, but if you let him start slow, when it gets to the sixth round it's a hard fight. I could have beaten him from the outside, but it would have been so much harder later. You get hit much cleaner on the outside. That said, my eyes closed up, my cheeks were so swollen that the sunglasses aren't on my eyes, and my insides were hurting. But you've got to pay the cost to be the boss, and that's boxing. That's what we did."

By the fifth, Corrales appeared to have sapped much of Castillo's strength, but they continued to trade toe-to-toe into the sixth, and by the end of the round the Mexican was on top, hurting Corrales with a sustained attack that culminated in a left hook to the jaw followed by a left uppercut. In the seventh it was Castillo's turn to take a step back from a four-punch burst by Corrales. In the last 10 seconds they swapped vicious combinations and landed almost simultaneously with left hooks. Castillo was shaken to his boots and was in reverse at the bell.

Round eight featured incredible intensity, Corrales starting off with a two-fisted assault, Castillo countering with a hard right. Two solid hooks by Corrales followed before a strong left hook by Castillo. Fractions of an inch and split seconds were determining the frequent shifts in momentum. A left hook by Corrales was answered by a five-punch Castillo combination, two hooks twisting Corrales' neck. Another Castillo left

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

It was left hook from Castillo such as this that accounted for the two knockdowns he scores in the 10th round (above). But somehow, Corrales found the inner strength to climb off the floor and rally back to win later the same round (opposite page). This is now the lightweight classic against which all others will be judged.

PHOTO BY NICK LAHAM/GETTY IMAGES

hook forced Corrales to retaliate with a right that rocked the Mexican. Already, this was Fight of the Year, no matter what followed.

Twice in the ninth, Castillo, 31, was warned by American referee Tony Weeks for punching low. A left hook by Corrales shook Castillo again. Castillo fired a left hook of his own and dropped his hands, leaving an opening for Corrales to land a heavy right to the jaw just before the bell. Castillo staggered to his stool.

The conditioning and recuperative powers of both men proved astounding. At the start of the 10th, Castillo was fully recovered and a left hook that landed flush on Corrales' chin knocked the American to the floor. This appeared to be the decisive turn. Corrales made it to his feet at nine and gained precious extra seconds as Weeks replaced his mouthpiece, which had fallen out. When they came together again, two more left hooks by Castillo sent Corrales down for the second time. He removed his mouthpiece and looked a beaten man. Incredibly, he was up at nine again, and when Weeks asked him, "Are you all right?" he nodded his head. "I'm all right," he replied.

Again the mouthpiece had to be replaced, and Weeks ordered a point deducted from Corrales' total, but, more significantly, "Chico's" head was clearing while this was being done.

"When a fighter gets knocked down and pulls out his mouthpiece, the penalty should not be a point deduction," roared an irate Bob Arum, Castillo's promoter. "He got 28 seconds. Forget 'The Long Count' (when Gene Tunney profited against Jack Dempsey in 1927). This was ridiculous."

But Castillo still had the initiative and he came away from the neutral corner intent on finishing the fight. A left and right pushed back Corrales to the ropes, but a wild left in return caught Castillo and he was shaken badly by a right. A left hook forced him to give ground. The most sensational of turnarounds had been triggered.

"That's what started it," said Corrales, "two right hands, two left hands. It was over from there. His hands dropped."

Castillo, the hunter just seconds before, was now the prey and his defenses had been taken away. Propped on the ropes, he offered no more resistance as Corrales lined up his final devastating attack. As Castillo's head rolled frighteningly on his shoulders, Weeks stepped in at exactly the right moment. Some observers suggested that he might have issued an eight-count, as the ropes were keeping Castillo upright, but this is a sport in which men get killed. Weeks made the correct call.

"This man has a family, like I got a family. You can't let someone like me take two or three clear shots like that," emphasized Corrales. "There's no reason for anyone to get irreversibly hurt."

Not when both men had proved themselves to be warriors of the highest order. Castillo recovered quickly and the two fighters embraced in a truly moving moment in the Mexican's corner.

"It was an honor to fight him," Castillo declared.

It was a privilege to watch. Not only was it the greatest lightweight fight in history, but also one of the very best that two boxers at any weight have ever offered. ■

Brian Doogan is THE RING's European correspondent.

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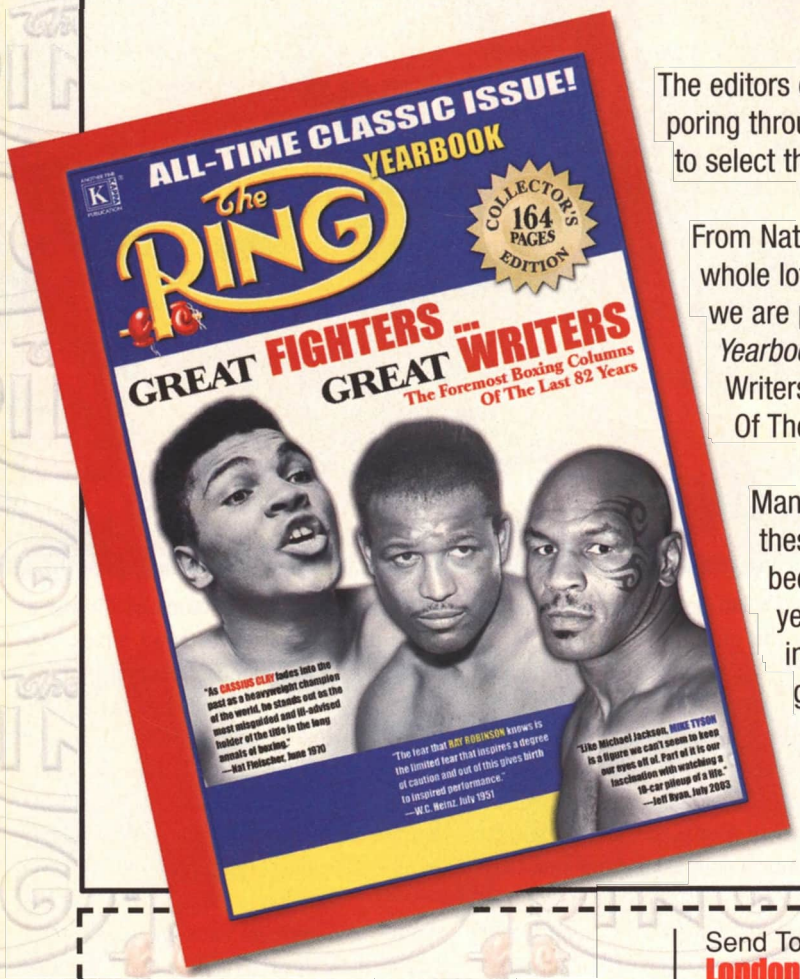

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GREAT CAREER COMEBACKS

How 10 Fighters Reinvented Themselves And Changed Boxing History

By Gavin Evans

We live in the age of the comeback. In boxing, as in life, no fall is too far, no absence too long to prevent the defeated politician, straying preacher, or plagiaristic journalist returning to glory. So it is with boxers. The whole idea is to disappear for a while and then return reinvigorated, with a fresh sense of mission.

Ideally, it's best to come back while still young enough to score. Think, say, of Ezzard Charles, who flourished at middleweight before being dropped eight times and then stopped by Lloyd Marshall. When Charles returned three years later, he beat Marshall (twice), Archie Moore (three times), won the heavyweight title and defended it eight times. Then there was Charles' great rival Jersey Joe Walcott, who retired for three years after a knockout loss to Abe Simon, then came back newly ambitious at 31, went on to outbox Joe Louis, and, finally to win the world title on his fifth try.

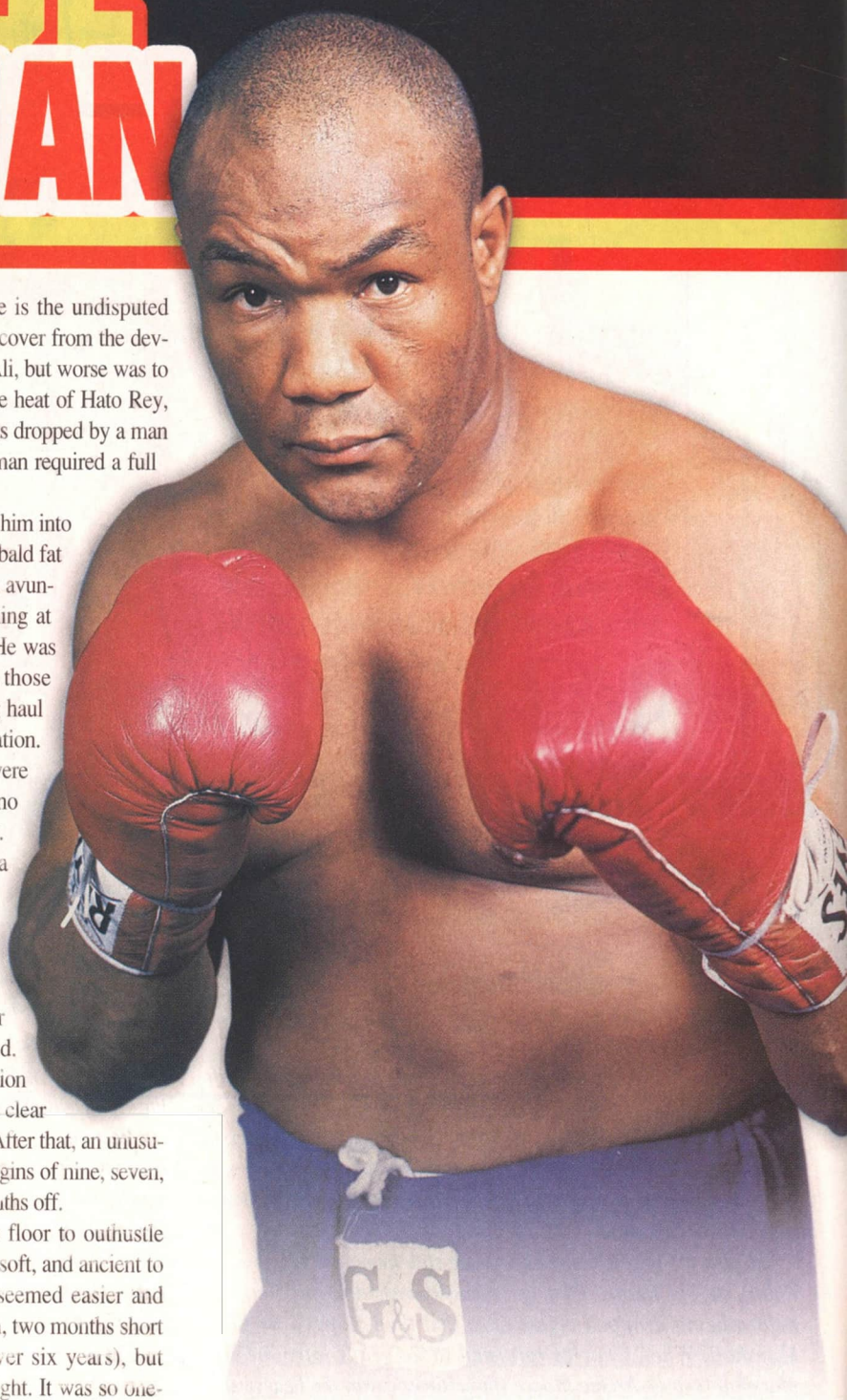
For better or for worse, 2005 seems to be the year of the retread. The most successful has been Zab Judah, whose rejuvenation has been nothing short of sensational. Others on the comeback trail have met with mixed results. Kostya Tszyu, after 22 months of injury-induced inaction, looked marvelous against Sharmba Mitchell, but then fell apart against Ricky Hatton. Likewise, Felix Trinidad, who promised so much in beating up Ricardo Mayorga after 2½ years on the sidelines, but delivered so little in getting pasted by Winky Wright.

After years of near-obscurity, James Toney reinvented himself as a heavyweight, working his way back into prominence by beating Vasiliy Jirov and Evander Holyfield. Then, after 18 months of injury-strewn stasis, he fulfilled every promise by decisioning John Ruiz for the WBA heavyweight strap. Only problem is that the 36-year-old tested positive for steroids afterward, which changed the win over Ruiz to a no-contest.

Finally, Riddick Bowe filled eight years of retirement with activities such as beating his wife and kidnapping his family, prompting a spell in jail where he told us he wasn't really brain damaged and that he wanted to fight Lennox Lewis (at last). The most he's delivered in his 280-pound splendor is a disputed split decision over one Billy Zumbrun. From the wiggly, jingly, wobbly signs so far, this is one comeback destined to stink and sink.

So then, what are the criteria for our golden comeback list? Rise high, retire (or fall exceptionally low), and return to glory. Here, then, are 10 of the most success career comebacks in boxing history.

GEORGE FOREMAN



You got to start at the top, and Big George is the undisputed comeback king. He needed 18 months to recover from the devastation of being flattened by Muhammad Ali, but worse was to come. He fought the slippery Jimmy Young in the heat of Hato Rey, Puerto Rico, in 1977, and not only lost big, but was dropped by a man with a 26 percent stoppage ratio. After that, Foreman required a full decade of re-invention.

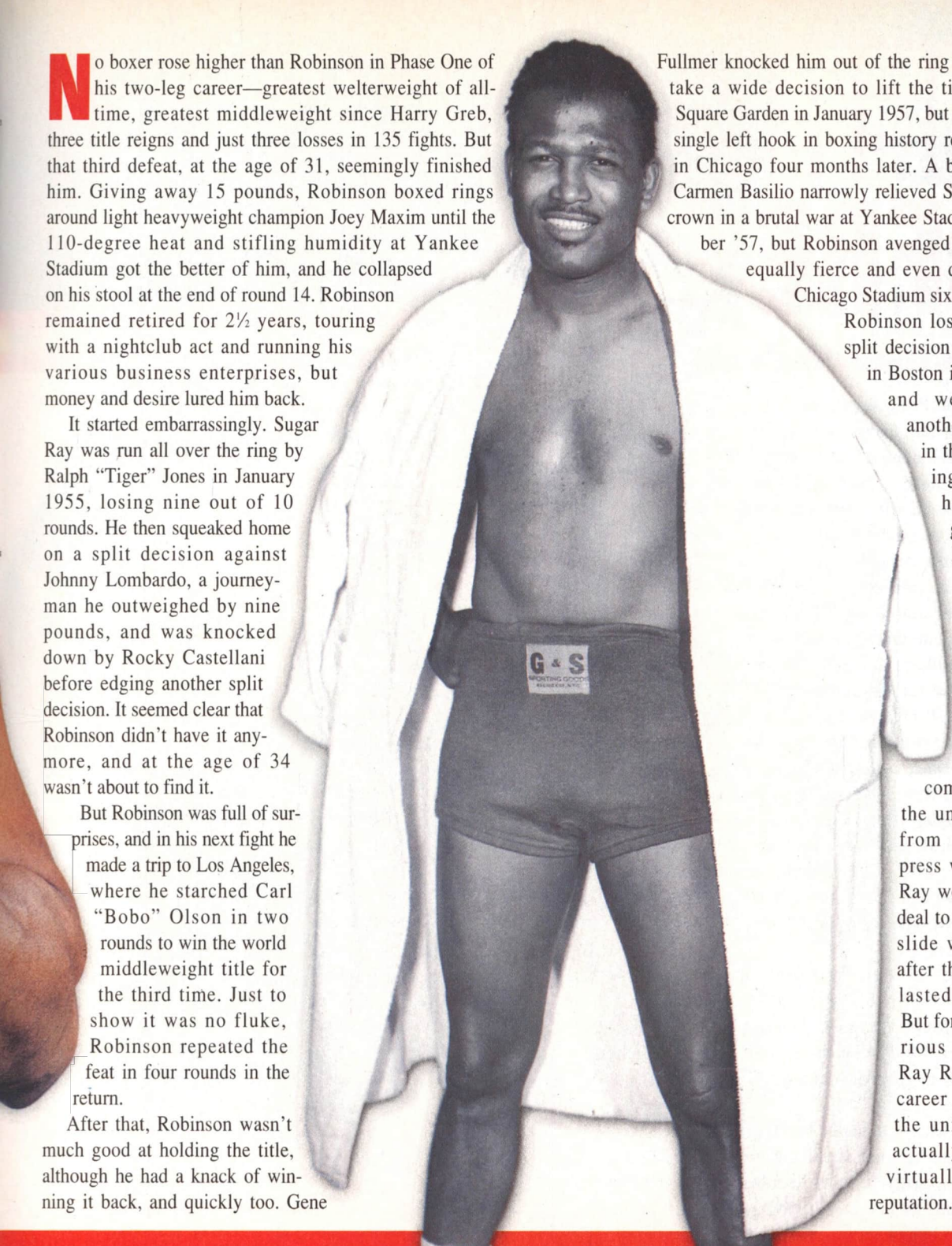
A blinded-by-the-light conversion transformed him into a preacher, after which he changed bodies (with a bald fat man) and personalities too, reemerging as a sunny, avuncular fellow who liked nothing better than laughing at himself. Of course, the truth was quite different: He was still a hard bastard, working tirelessly to build those biceps and develop a style more suited to the long haul than the explosive, quick-to-tire, youthful incarnation. He could be as nasty as ever when the cameras were off, but no one noticed because, really, he was no more than laugh-along sideshow. Or so we thought.

In comeback fight number 20, Foreman gave a hint of what was to come when he absorbed a monstrous hook from Gerry Cooney and then obliterated "Gentleman Jerry" in two rounds, but the next level up seemed a step too far. Foreman's 49-pound edge kept him standing against Evander Holyfield (barely), but he was soundly outboxed. Next, Foreman squeaked home on majority decision against Alex Stewart, his hideously swollen face a clear sign that this was not a game for the middle aged. After that, an unusually disciplined Tommy Morrison beat him by margins of nine, seven, and seven points, after which Foreman took 17 months off.

Meanwhile, Michael Moorer climbed off the floor to outhustle Holyfield for the title, and wanted something big, soft, and ancient to play with for his maiden defense. Big George seemed easier and more marketable than Larry Holmes. The old man, two months short of 46, came in at 250 pounds (his lightest in over six years), but seemed no match for the one-time light heavyweight. It was so one-sided that referee Joe Cortez thought of stopping it, but in round 10 the porcelain-chinned Moorer paused a second too long to admire his work, and with one slow but accurate and well-timed right from Big George, it was over. The greatest comeback of all-time had reached its unlikely climax.

Foreman, being a wise old gent, made sure his invitation was extended as long as possible by refusing to accommodate anyone who could actually fight, until finally, when he was nearing 49, the 25-year-old Shannon Briggs edged him on a questionable nod, after which Foreman shifted his bulk to selling grilling machines full-time. But his comeback set the contemporary template and every other retired heavy, from Larry Holmes downward, followed his example by going in for a retread.

SUGAR RAY ROBINSON



No boxer rose higher than Robinson in Phase One of his two-leg career—greatest welterweight of all-time, greatest middleweight since Harry Greb, three title reigns and just three losses in 135 fights. But that third defeat, at the age of 31, seemingly finished him. Giving away 15 pounds, Robinson boxed rings around light heavyweight champion Joey Maxim until the 110-degree heat and stifling humidity at Yankee Stadium got the better of him, and he collapsed on his stool at the end of round 14. Robinson remained retired for 2½ years, touring with a nightclub act and running his various business enterprises, but money and desire lured him back.

It started embarrassingly. Sugar Ray was run all over the ring by Ralph "Tiger" Jones in January 1955, losing nine out of 10 rounds. He then squeaked home on a split decision against Johnny Lombardo, a journeyman he outweighed by nine pounds, and was knocked down by Rocky Castellani before edging another split decision. It seemed clear that Robinson didn't have it anymore, and at the age of 34 wasn't about to find it.

But Robinson was full of surprises, and in his next fight he made a trip to Los Angeles, where he starched Carl "Bobo" Olson in two rounds to win the world middleweight title for the third time. Just to show it was no fluke, Robinson repeated the feat in four rounds in the return.

After that, Robinson wasn't much good at holding the title, although he had a knack of winning it back, and quickly too. Gene Fullmer knocked him out of the ring and went on to take a wide decision to lift the title at Madison Square Garden in January 1957, but perhaps the best single left hook in boxing history regained the title in Chicago four months later. A blood-splattered Carmen Basilio narrowly relieved Sugar Ray of the crown in a brutal war at Yankee Stadium in September '57, but Robinson avenged that one in the equally fierce and even dirtier return at Chicago Stadium six months later.

Robinson lost it again on a split decision to Paul Pender in Boston in January 1960 and went down on another split verdict in the return. Nearing 40, Robinson had one more great fight left. He challenged Fullmer for the NBA version of the title in Las Vegas in December '60, and although the official outcome was a draw, the unanimous view from the ringside press was that Sugar Ray won with a good deal to spare. Still, the slide was inevitable after that, and, sadly, lasted far too long. But for those five glorious years, Sugar Ray Robinson's late career comeback had the unique effect of actually enhancing a virtually impeccable reputation.

EDER JOFRE

This little Sao Paulo vegetarian is to Brazilians what Ray Robinson is to everyone else—one of the finest fighters pound-for-pound in boxing history, the best ever in his division, and a two-division world champion who pulled off one of the most remarkable comebacks in boxing history.

To give you a sense of his standing, THE RING's founding editor, Nat Fleischer, who hated rating anyone much younger than himself (and couldn't find a place in his divisional top 10 for Muhammad Ali, Joe Frazier, Bob Foster, or Carlos Monzon), made Jofre his number three 118-pounder of all-time, calling him the "bantamweight Sugar Ray Robinson." Like Robinson, he was a stylist with a big punch in both hands, quick reflexes, and perfect balance. Jofre also came with a tight, multi-layered defense, a great chin, and an ability to adapt to any style. He could box, brawl, counterpunch, bob-and-weave, whatever it took.

Jofre won the NBA version of the bantamweight title in his 40th bout, in November 1960, by knocking out Eloy Sanchez in the sixth round with a right cross to the jaw. Two defenses and 14 months later, he unified the title by stopping Britain's Johnny Caldwell in 10 rounds and defended it five times over the next 3½ years.

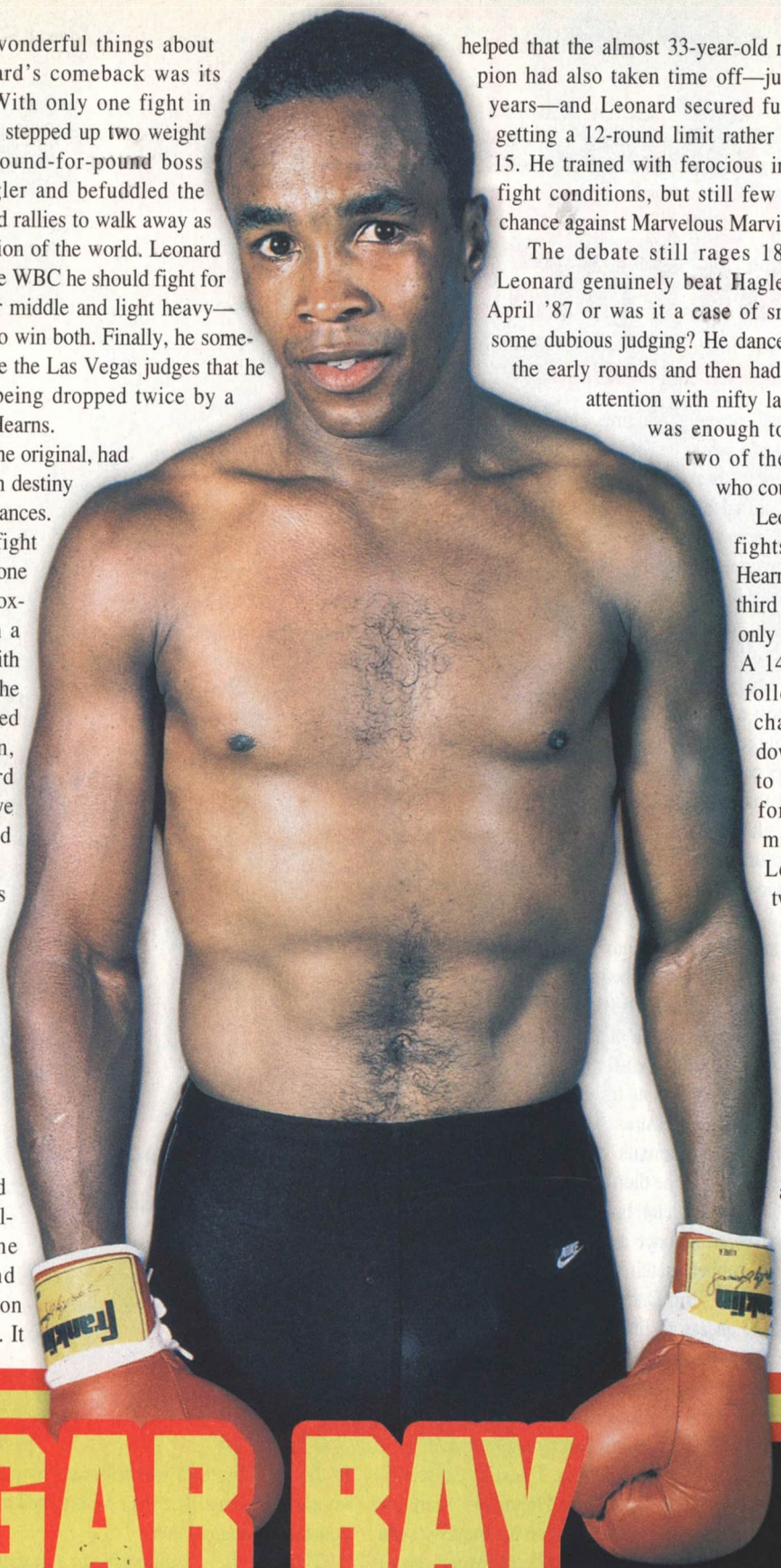
Jofre's reign finally ended in May '65 when he traveled to Japan to defend against local hero Fighting Harada. Dehydrated by making weight, Jofre dropped a dubious split decision, his first loss in 51 fights. A year later, again in Japan, they fought a return, and this time the relentless, marauding Harada legitimately won an extremely close decision.

Disappointed by this setback and unable to make bantamweight anymore, Jofre retired at the age of 30 and was out of action for more than three years. But eventually, the money, the adulation, and the thrill of fighting pulled him back, and, unlike Robinson, there were no blips along the way—25 fights, 25 wins, 13 knockouts.

Starting in late-'69, he began working his way through the featherweight division, until shortly before his 37th birthday, in May '73, he used his power and craft to outbox the outstanding 29-year-old Spaniard Jose Legra to win the WBC title belt. Five months later, he made his first defense against another Hall of Fame entrant, Mexico's Vincente Saldivar, knocking him out with a left hook to the chin in the fourth round.

After one more win, Jofre was stripped of his title and stayed away for two years, but in 1976 he returned to pick up six more wins, finally retiring at the age of 40 with a 72-2-4 (50) record. He went on to become mayor of Sao Paulo.

SUGAR RAY LEONARD



One of the many wonderful things about Sugar Ray Leonard's comeback was its sheer audacity. With only one fight in more than five years, he stepped up two weight divisions to take on pound-for-pound boss Marvelous Marvin Hagler and befuddled the judges with his late-round rallies to walk away as the middleweight champion of the world. Leonard then persuaded the pliable WBC he should fight for two titles at once—super middle and light heavy—beating Donny Lalonde to win both. Finally, he somehow managed to persuade the Las Vegas judges that he deserved a draw after being dropped twice by a weight-drained Tommy Hearns.

This Sugar Ray, like the original, had a way of creating his own destiny rather than waiting for chances. The first, five-year, 33-fight phase of his career was one of the most dazzling in boxing history, making him a two-division champion with stoppage victories over the outstanding trio of Wilfred Benitez, Roberto Duran, and Hearns. But Leonard was forced to say goodbye as a result of a detached retina.

More than two years later, following eye surgery, Leonard returned for a trial run against the unprepossessing Kevin Howard, and found himself on the floor for the first time in his career before pulling off a shaky ninth-round TKO. He retired again, but marital difficulties and a little cocaine problem followed, and Leonard decided salvation lay in challenging Hagler. It helped that the almost 33-year-old middleweight champion had also taken time off—just one fight in two years—and Leonard secured further advantage by getting a 12-round limit rather than the then-usual 15. He trained with ferocious intensity, simulating fight conditions, but still few gave him any real chance against Marvelous Marvin.

The debate still rages 18 years later: Did Leonard genuinely beat Hagler in Las Vegas in April '87 or was it a case of smoke, mirrors, and some dubious judging? He danced his way to shade the early rounds and then had a way of grabbing attention with nifty late-round flurries. It was enough to win the votes of two of the three ringsiders who counted.

Leonard followed with fights against Lalonde, Hearns, and Duran (for a third time), but you can only test fate for a while. A 14-month break was followed by another challenge—to drop down in weight again to fight Terry Norris for the WBC junior middleweight title. Leonard was down twice and lost a wide unanimous decision. But the temptation lingered, and more than six years later he gave in, losing on an embarrassing fifth-round stoppage to former lightweight and super featherweight titleholder Hector Camacho, after which Leonard retired for good.

EVANDER HOLYFIELD

"The Real Deal" never quite retires. He loses, lays low for a while, consults his maker, and then comes back again. Over the last few years, the law of diminishing returns has kicked in with worrying implications, but there was a time when Holyfield's propensity for regeneration seemed to defy all known logic.

Discipline and determination, along with bags of innate talent, carried him to the world cruiserweight and heavyweight championships. But his title loss to Riddick Bowe in his fourth defense suggested limitations. Weighing a mere 205 pounds, Holyfield was battered around the ring and then knocked down, and although he won kudos for immense courage, he seemed to have reached a logical end to his outstanding career.

But a year later and 12 pounds heavier, Commander Vander was back, looking better than ever, to avenge the Bowe defeat, beginning a long rise-and-fall cycle. He quickly lost the title to Michael Moorer, at first blaming a mystery heart defect, then claiming divine healing, before changing his mind and claiming there was no heart problem to start with, merely water retention issues. Lennox Lewis expressed the prevailing consensus when he said, "Boxing would be better served if he didn't fight again."

Holyfield returned 13 months later, but after a sound points win over Ray Mercer, he once again short-circuited, this time in his rubber match with Bowe in November '95. He dropped "Big Daddy" heavily in round six, but lacked the energy to finish the job and ended up getting dropped twice before being rescued in round eight, his first-ever stoppage defeat.

Instead of retiring, Holyfield blamed this setback on illness, but looked curiously frail stopping Bobby Czyz, which seemed to be why Don King chose him as Mike Tyson's next sacrificial lamb. But few had reckoned sufficiently on Holyfield's heart, the metaphorical one this time. Inspired by the verse on his trunks ("I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."), he staged one of the greatest comeback victories of all-time, sucking up the punches, roughing Tyson up on the inside, and headbutting him while using his superior skill and condition to step up the pace, floor Tyson with a bodyshot, and then finish him in round 11. A disqualification victory in the ear-job return was followed by emphatic eighth round, five-knockdown vengeance over Moorer and a unanimous win over fringe contender Vaughn Bean.

But Holyfield's magnificent run came to an end when Lewis soundly outboxed him for the undisputed world title in March '97. After that, he managed just two wins in seven starts, and yet still he refused to retire. Even today, at age 42, Holyfield insists his goal is unchanged—to regain the world heavyweight title.

On February 3, 1970, Muhammad Ali announced he would never again enter the ring as a professional boxer. It was a belated response to a pair of unconscionable official decisions. The WBA stripped him of the world title in 1967 and banned him from fighting in the United States in reaction to Ali's refusal to be inducted into the military during the Vietnam War. Then the District Court in Texas sentenced him to five years imprisonment. Moreover, his bail conditions during the appeal process prevented him from fighting abroad.

Eventually, the U.S. Supreme Court found in Ali's favor and the state of Georgia granted him a boxing license, and so, after three years and seven months on the shelf, Ali returned to stop Jerry Quarry in three rounds in Atlanta on October 26, 1970. Six weeks later, he had a harder time with Oscar Bonavena at Madison Square Garden, struggling to find his rhythm before dropping the Argentinean three times in round 15 to secure a TKO victory. This took Ali to the Fight of the Century against world champion Joe Frazier at MSG on March 8, 1971. Frazier ended the fight with his jaw, face, and eyes swollen, but he dropped Ali in the 15th round and deserved his unanimous points win.

"The Greatest" then showed how to come back the right way after a long layoff. He got down to fighting regularly and against serious opposition. Starting with former WBA titlist Jimmy Ellis, he worked his way through the contenders, picking up 10 wins in 18 months. Ali suffered a broken jaw on his way to a points loss against Ken Norton, but in the rematch five months later, he edged home on a split decision. He then avenged the Frazier defeat, clearly beating him via 12-round decision.

Still, by the time Ali fought George Foreman, in Kinshasa, Zaire, on October 30, 1974, he was nearly 33 years old and seemed well past his prime. But Ali understood his own weaknesses as well as his opponent's. Realizing he no longer had the legs to dance for 15 rounds, Ali preserved his energy by fighting off the ropes until Foreman ran out of gas and was knocked out with a right to the jaw in round eight.

Ten defenses followed over the next 3½ years. Some were easy, others brutal (particularly the third Frazier fight in Manila), and two (Ken Norton and Jimmy Young) ended with dubious decisions in his favor. Finally, in February 1978, at the age of 36, he lost the title to the novice Leon Spinks, regained it, and retired again. But Ali was always one for tempting fate, and so he returned two years later for a terrible defeat against Larry Holmes, followed 14 months later by a points loss to Trevor Berbick. The comebacks that followed all took place beyond the ropes.

MUHAMMAD ALI

JIMMY BRADDOCK

"The Cinderella Man" didn't exactly retired. It was more that his career ground to a halt. The once promising light heavyweight had become a no-hope multiple loser and it was this status that eventually helped him back.

A talented amateur, Braddock excelled at first in the professional game by using his skill and hard right to go 36 fights without defeat. He beat several leading contenders to make the front cover of THE RING under the headline: "Jimmy Braddock, One Of The World's Greatest Light Heavyweights." But his fortunes slumped after a wide points loss in a title fight against Tommy Loughran—just in time for the 1929 stock market collapse—and he was reduced to taking fights at short notice for a pittance, often with injured hands. Desperate to provide for his wife and three children, he hunted for day jobs, but work was scarce and they were forced to move out of their apartment and into the basement, while surviving on welfare checks.

With just 11 wins in his last 33 fights, Braddock went into cold storage in 1933, partly because his right hand broke whenever he landed it. But his nine months of enforced retirement gave time for the bones to heal, while his body grew strong from periodic shifts as a longshoreman. In June '34, his manager, Joe Gould found him a fight against a young prospect, Corn Griffin. "I had about two days notice that I was going to fight Griffin," Braddock said. "Two hours would have been enough." He finished Griffin in the third—for a purse of $250. This led to a return with John Henry Lewis, who'd beaten him two years earlier. Braddock won easily for a $700 purse. Next he fought heavyweight contender Art Lasky for $2,000 and romped home the winner again.

Braddock was offered a surprise shot at heavyweight champion Max Baer, but felt it necessary to offer this assurance: "I may not be a great fighter, but I ain't no bum." On the big night, Braddock jabbed and moved and now and then stepped in with a right cross, while the perpetually clowning champion would land a few and step away to smile at the ringsiders. Baer came on strong in the 15th, enough to win the round, but not the fight.

The Cinderella Man reigned for two quiet years before finally defending against Joe Louis in June '37, dropping "The Brown Bomber" with a right in round one before going down for the count in the eighth, having previously secured a share of Louis' purses over the next decade in the event of defeat. Seven months later, at the age of 33, Braddock had his 86th and final fight when he won a split decision over British champion Tommy Farr.

Some boxers refuse to burn slowly. Like meteors, they flare brightly but all too briefly before burning up. Arturo Gatti epitomized this breed, a man who gave us more blood, guts, and thrills per fighting minute than anyone else in the modern game. But perhaps too much, or so it seemed.

His victorious IBF junior lightweight title fights against Tracy Harris Patterson (twice) and Wilson Rodriguez and his non-title knockout of Calvin Grove were exciting enough, and those were just the hors d'oeuvres. They were followed by the main course, which turned out to be THE RING's 1997 Fight of the Year, when Gatti came back from the brink to stop Gabriel Ruelas in the fifth round.

The three thrillers that followed, however, all saw "Thunder" on the losing side as he was dropped and carved up by Angel Manfredy, lost a split decision to Ivan Robinson in THE RING's 1998 Fight of the Year, and then lost a hairline unanimous decision in the return.

Gatti hovered between junior welterweight and welter until he ran into Oscar De La Hoya, who dropped and battered him until Gatti's compassionate corner threw in the towel early in round five. With his propensity to cut and swell around the eyes and his inability to take or get out of the way of punches, the only sensible solution seemed to be retirement.

Gatti, however, had a better idea: Learn to box (again). He turned to an older master, Buddy McGirt, and took 10 months off, working on his footwork, defense, head movement, and combination punching. What emerged was a more controlled and self-preserving Gatti. His first test came in January '02 against former IBF light welterweight titlist Terron Millett, and he passed with distinction, seldom taking a punch before ending it in five one-sided rounds.

Gatti faltered, however, in test number two, against Micky Ward. He followed McGirt's script at first, but was then drawn into perhaps the most intense of his many wars. In the end, Gatti emerged on the wrong side of a disputed majority decision.

The loss to Ward seemed to help him absorb the lessons McGirt was hammering home in the gym. Gatti outpointed Ward in their second and third bouts by relying as much on his speed and skill as on his punching power and fighting heart. The unforgettable trilogy with Ward was followed by winning a tactical battle with Italian Gianfranca Branco over 12 relatively tame rounds. Next, Gatti stopped the unbeaten former WBA lightweight titleholder Leonard Dorin with a perfect hook to the body in round two, and put it all in perspective: "It was more than just a victory to me. I didn't have to go to the hospital afterward."

Gatti followed the Dorin triumph by stopping veteran contender Jesse James Leija in five with a disciplined and perfectly timed attack, setting up his showdown with Floyd Mayweather, which provided a career-high payday more than fours years after the De La Hoya debacle.

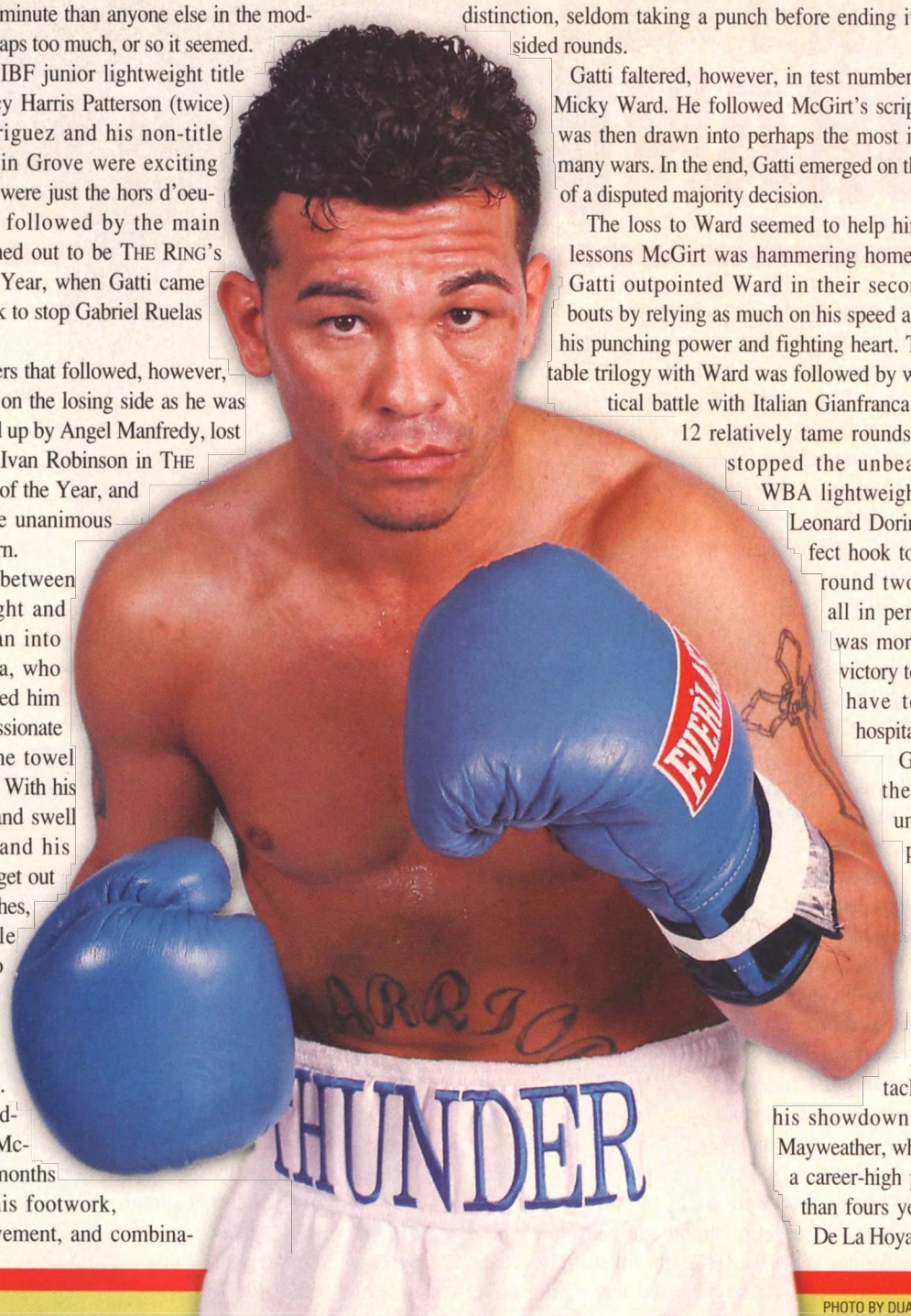
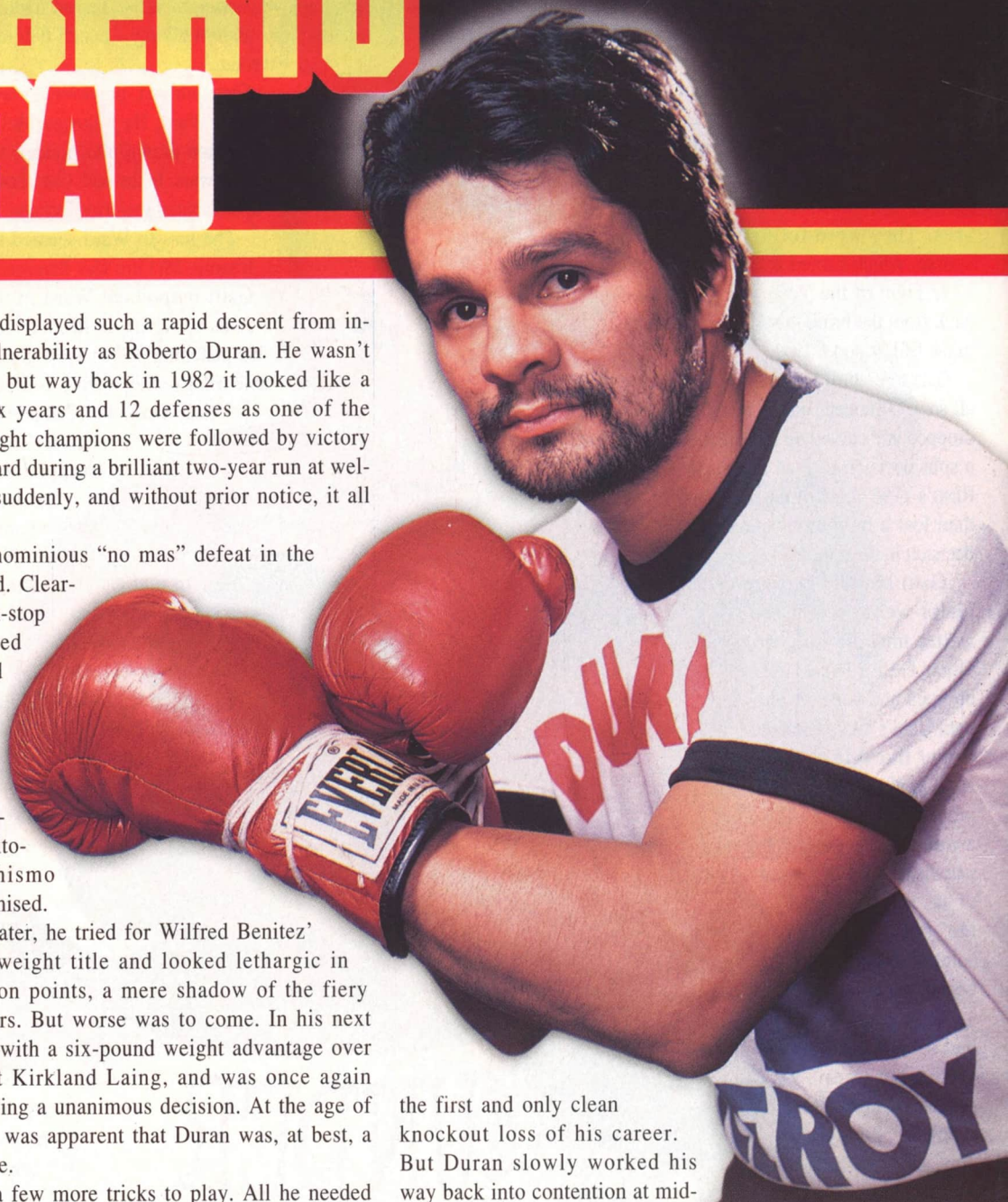


PHOTO BY DUANE LONG

ARTURO GATTI

ROBERTO DURAN



Few boxers have displayed such a rapid descent from invincibility to vulnerability as Roberto Duran. He wasn't one for retiring, but way back in 1982 it looked like a really good idea. Six years and 12 defenses as one of the greatest-ever lightweight champions were followed by victory over Sugar Ray Leonard during a brilliant two-year run at welterweight, and then, suddenly, and without prior notice, it all fell to pieces.

First came his ignominious "no mas" defeat in the rematch with Leonard. Clearly, five months of non-stop celebration had sapped Duran's energy and dulled his edge, but for "Hands Of Stone" simply to give up when taunted was a real shocker. His previous image as the epitome of defiant machismo was severely compromised.

Fourteen months later, he tried for Wilfred Benitez' WBC junior middleweight title and looked lethargic in going down tamely on points, a mere shadow of the fiery fighter of earlier years. But worse was to come. In his next bout, Duran came in with a six-pound weight advantage over British welterweight Kirkland Laing, and was once again handily outboxed, losing a unanimous decision. At the age of 31, after 77 fights, it was apparent that Duran was, at best, a rapidly declining force.

But "Cholo" had a few more tricks to play. All he needed was a bit of discipline to get his mind and body in shape. He outclassed the former WBA welterweight titlist Pipino Cuevas, stopping him in four round, and followed that with a brutally one-sided, eight-round demolition of the previously unbeaten Davey Moore to lift the WBA light middleweight title. His next move was significantly more ambitious, challenging the rampant Marvelous Marvin Hagler for the world middleweight title. Duran lost a decision, but only by a narrow margin, and confirmed his emerging reputation as a defensive master and one of the game's great counter-punchers.

By this stage of his career, Duran was no longer the reliable force of old, and there was a serious blip when he was blown away by a crushing right from Thomas Hearns in two rounds, the first and only clean knockout loss of his career. But Duran slowly worked his way back into contention at middleweight before pulling off perhaps the most astonishing upset of them all. He outboxed and even outfought the comparatively huge Iran Barkley, dropping him with a magnificent one-two in round 11 to take a split decision and WBC middleweight title in his 92nd professional fight. This proved to be his last great triumph, although he boxed with intermittent success for another 12 years, finally retiring after a bad car accident at the age of 50.

ZAB JUDAH

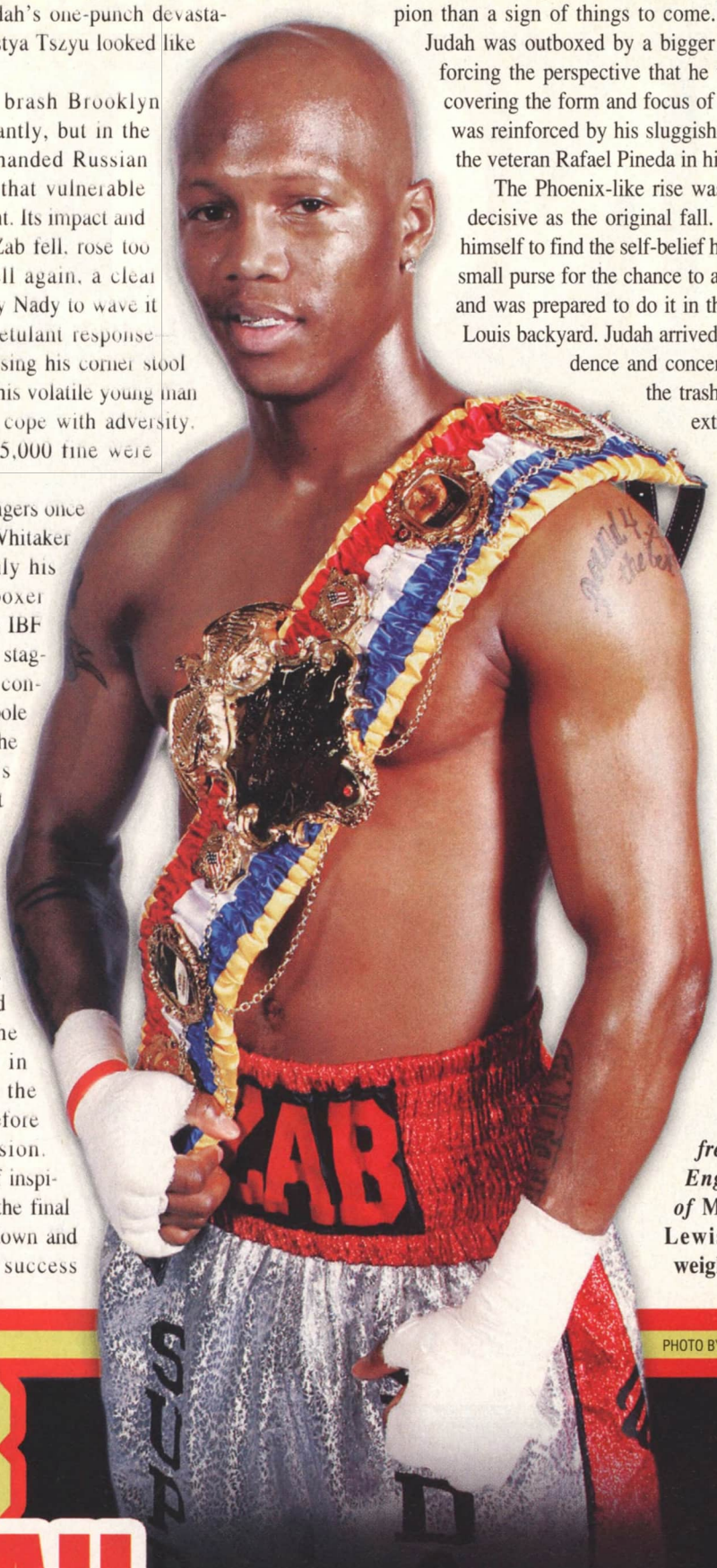


PHOTO BY DUANE LONG

There are some defeats so shattering that they break even the brightest of talents. Judah's one-punch devastation at the hands of Kostya Tszyu looked like one of those.

For three minutes the brash Brooklyn southpaw performed brilliantly, but in the second round, the heavy-handed Russian closed the gap and found that vulnerable Judah chin with a potent right. Its impact and aftershock were profound. Zab fell, rose too quickly, staggered, and fell again, a clear enough signal for referee Jay Nady to wave it off. Judah's pathetically petulant response—attacking Nady and then tossing his corner stool across the ring—suggested this volatile young man lacked the temperament to cope with adversity. His six-month ban and $75,000 fine were richly deserved.

Judah's army of praise-singers once described him as "Pernell Whitaker with a punch," and certainly his first 27 fights showed a boxer with the potential to use his IBF light welterweight title as a staging post for further global conquest. But this kind of hyperbole looked embarrassing after the Tszyu setback, and Judah's sparse output over the next four years offered no indication of a turnaround.

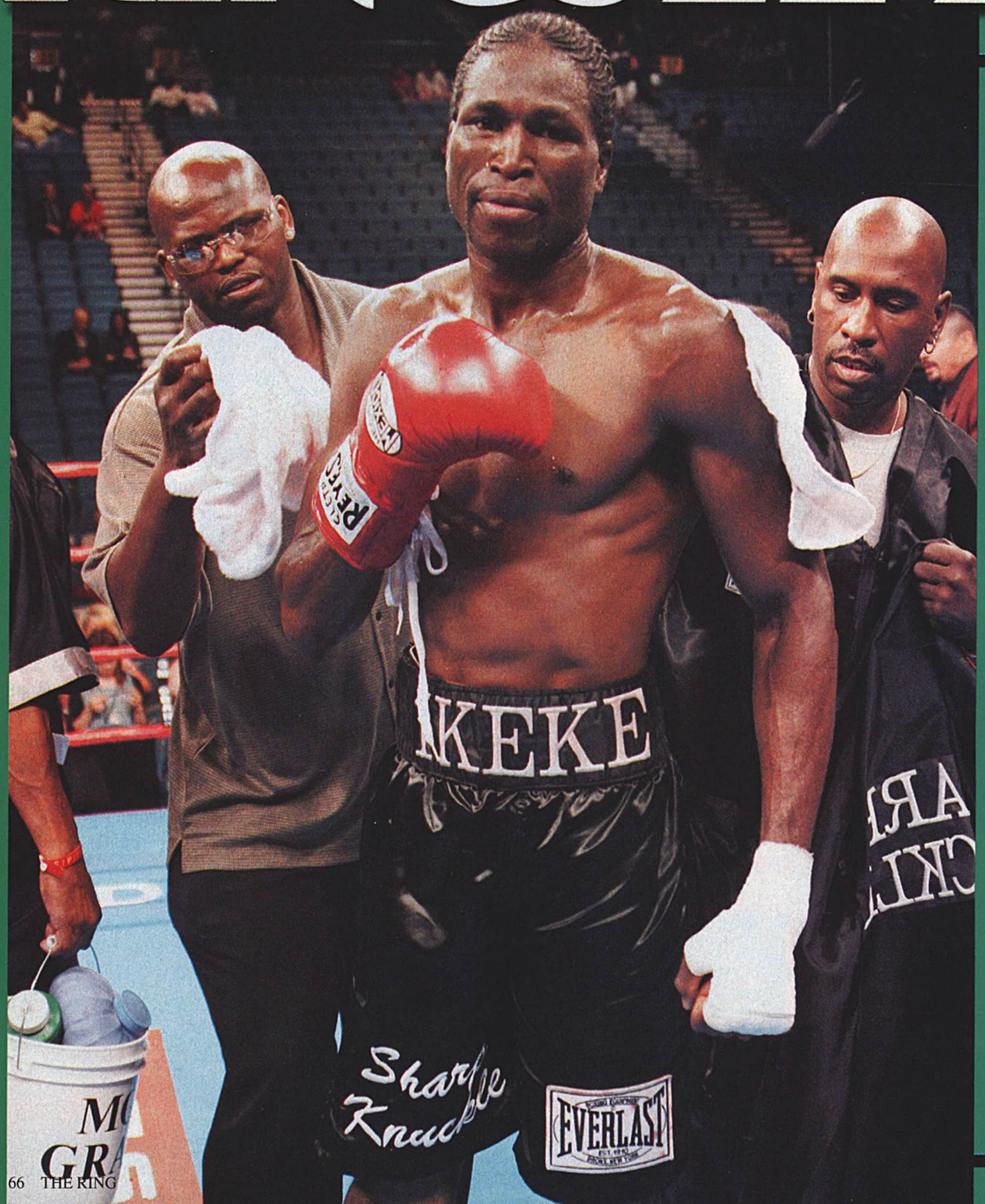
At times, he seemed gun-shy and lacked concentration. Lesser fighters like Omar Weiss and DeMarcus Corley gave him trouble, and when he challenged for the world welterweight title in 2004, he was dropped by the light-fisted Cory Spinks before losing a unanimous decision. Judah's only real moment of inspiration in that fight came in the final round when he put Spinks down and almost out, but even that success looked more like an lapse in focus from an otherwise sound champion than a sign of things to come. For much of the fight Judah was outboxed by a bigger and better boxer, reinforcing the perspective that he was incapable of rediscovering the form and focus of his youth. This opinion was reinforced by his sluggish split decision win over the veteran Rafael Pineda in his next fight.

The Phoenix-like rise was almost as sudden and decisive as the original fall. Judah dug deep within himself to find the self-belief he needed. He accepted a small purse for the chance to avenge the Spinks defeat and was prepared to do it in the world champion's St. Louis backyard. Judah arrived with unwavering confidence and concentration, dispensed with the trash talk, and displayed his extraordinary gifts of speed and power to their best effect, dominating early, then dropping Spinks and stopping him in the ninth round. The impression was confirmed in his next fight when he overwhelmed the previously resilient Cosme Rivera in three rounds, dropping him three times.

A year ago, Judah was just another faded prospect who failed to deliver on his potential. Today, having pulled off the comeback of the year, he is, once again, the face of the future. ■

***Gavin Evans is a freelance writer based in England and the author of* Mama's Boy: Lennox Lewis And The Heavyweight Crown.**

NIGERIAN MIDDLEWEIGHT KINGSLEY IKEKE



Ikeke, at 6'4", is extremely tall for a middleweight, but despite his lanky frame, the Nigerian doesn't lack strength and can fight adequately on the inside. It is at long range, however, that he befuddles most of his opponents, the majority of whom find it very difficult to get close enough to inflict any serious damage.

Winning The Title Might Not Be Such A Tall Order

By Robert Mladinich

When you've been a homeless, political refugee with nothing to sustain you but faith and a vision of a better tomorrow, facing another man in a boxing ring is nothing to fear, even if that man is the world champion.

Middleweight contender Kingsley Ikeke, a native of Nigeria who now resides in Los Angeles, says he has been chasing a professional boxing championship since he was three years old. With the exception of his deep-seated Christian faith, which Ikeke holds dear, he has never been interested in anything other than boxing. The sacrifices that he has made to bring his dreams to fruition seem more fictional than real, but Ikeke, who stands 6'4" tall, is much more than a physical anomaly.

He is a mass of contradictions and ambiguities who, on April 15 at the Northern Quest Casino in Airway Heights, Washington, finally found himself thrust into the public consciousness with an impressive 10th-round stoppage of hard-punching former title challenger Antwun Echols. Utilizing his tremendous jab, fluid movement, and crisp combinations, the 32-year-old Ikeke raised his record to 23-1 (13), while Echols saw his record dip to 31-6-1 (27).

"In people's eyes, they look at the Echols fight as a good fight," said Ikeke. "In my eyes, it was an easy fight. God told me it was my time. I pray every day to try and find what God's plan is for me. The Echols fight was a statement from Him. Everybody wanted to see what I bring to the table. Now I finally show them."

According to Ikeke's co-manager and attorney, Gary Gittlesohn, Ikeke has been chasing Jermain Taylor and Bernard Hopkins, as well as knocking on HBO's doors for several years. Ikeke had a tremendous reputation as a gym fighter, sparring with the likes of Julio Gonzalez, Jeff Lacy, and Shane Mosley. It was his heated sparring sessions with Mosley that really made Gittlesohn take notice.

"Kingsley was working with Shane while Shane was preparing for the second Oscar De La Hoya fight at the Wild Card Gym in Los Angeles," said Gittlesohn. "I had heard all about him from Nelson Oliveira, who was Kingsley's adviser when Kingsley was living in Toronto. Kingsley had a very easy time with Shane. Even Larry Merchant, who was in the gym, commented that he looked very good. At that point, I really took a close look at him, and realized he had the potential for greatness."

Gittlesohn, working in conjunction with Oliveira, started handling Ikeke's affairs in late-2003, shortly after the fighter stopped Kenny Ellis in the sixth round to win the vacant NABF title. In each successive fight leading up to the Echols bout, the level of the opposition has been upped, with Ikeke beating durable veteran Kirino Garcia (W 12), as well as solid second-tier opponents Alfredo Cuevas (Tech. Dec. 8), Rene

Ikeke shoots a right through Alfredo Cuevas' guard en route to an eighth-round technical decision victory in July 2004. His management team has been gradually stepping up the quality of opposition and feels that Ikeke is ready for the very best the 160-pound division has to offer.

Arostegui (KO 5), and Marcos Primera (KO 4).

"One thing that people don't realize is how difficult it is getting Kingsley fights," said Oliveira. "We've had at least eight or nine fights fall through. In the early days, before Gary was involved, I'd have him hide at the weigh-ins so he could weigh in last. Once people saw how tall he was, they'd get nervous and pull out at the last minute. It was very frustrating."

Among his many other positive traits, Ikeke is an extremely patient man. His faith in God has enabled him to overcome so many other obstacles in life, he never once wavered in his belief that he would someday win a world title. Although raised in relative comfort by his grandparents in Benin City, Nigeria, Ikeke, who has 15 siblings, never returned home after competing for his native country at the Commonwealth Games in Vancouver, Canada, in 1994. Nigeria's government had just been toppled by the military and there was an abundance of violence and political unrest waiting for him in his native land.

After receiving political asylum, Ikeke took a bus from Vancouver to Toronto, which he mistakenly believed to be a boxing hotbed. He lived in a homeless shelter for six months and took a job working the graveyard shift in a bakery so he could train during the day. He regularly sparred with Otis Grant, who traveled from Montreal to Toronto to work with Ikeke while preparing for his bout with Lonnie Bradley. Because Ikeke had no one to handle his affairs, he was making his own fights, which were few and far between. In his third pro bout, he won a six-round decision over Anthony Bonsante, who later stopped Tony Ayala Jr. and was also featured on *The Contender* reality television series, the cast of which Ikeke almost joined.

At the Atlas Boxing Gym in Toronto, Ikeke developed a solid relationship with Oliveira, who was friendly with Gittlesohn. Realizing that being north of the border was not in Ikeke's best interests, Oliveira arranged for Ikeke to move to California in 1998. Ikeke's fortunes, however, truly began to change in 2001 when he was hired by Main Events as a sparring partner for Lacy, who was training in Big Bear, California. Keeping his homeless situation to himself, Ikeke saved every penny he earned from those spirited sparring sessions so he could rent the small North Hollywood apartment where he and his girlfriend, Carol Bronner, still live.

During this time, Ikeke became em-

PHOTO BY JENNIFER SIMMONS

Two-time former title challenger Antwun Echols takes a right cross from Ikeke during their April 2005 bout that resulted in a 10th-round kayo victory for the transplanted Nigerian. It was the most significant win of Ikeke's career and helped him advance in the ratings.

broiled in litigation with his initial manager, Jimmy Montoya, and encountered no shortage of other problems along the way. When Gittlesohn came aboard, he vowed to give Ikeke the means to train and fight without having to worry about where his next meal was coming from.

"A lot of fighters come up the hard way, but Kingsley's story was more hardscrabble than most," said Gittlesohn. "Yet nothing seemed to deter him from his quest. I've never met anyone more determined and focused on one goal. He is so ferocious in the ring, yet so modest, humble, and spiritual outside of it. He's an all-around good citizen, and his religion is his sustenance."

Gittlesohn said the ambiguities don't stop there. Because Ikeke is so tall for a middleweight, one might expect him to be physically weak or unable to fight on the inside. But Ikeke is as effective fighting in the trenches as he is jabbing and popping off rapid-fire combinations from the outside.

"He's a terrific athlete," said Gittlesohn. "For such a tall middleweight, he's not freakishly skinny. He's proportioned very well and uses his tremendous physicality to its best advantage. He reminds me a lot of Junior Jones (whom Gittlesohn also managed), who was a 5'9" bantamweight and had shoulders so wide you could land an airplane on them."

Prior to getting involved with Ikeke, Gittlesohn was ringside in Canton, Ohio, in July 2001, when Ikeke suffered his sole professional loss, a 10-round decision to the then-hot Anthony Hanshaw, who was being groomed for superstardom by Main Events. Hanshaw, who was 11-0 (9) at the time, had been a sensational amateur who many believed would be an even better pro. Although Hanshaw won the decision, most ringsiders, according to Gittlesohn, thought the fight belonged to Ikeke.

"Hanshaw was from Canton (actually Mansfield, Ohio), so I and many others believed that Kingsley was the victim of some home cooking," said Gittlesohn. "And everybody at the fight was there to see Hanshaw, who was supposed to be the next big thing. Now his career is stalled by personal problems and injuries, and Kingsley is on his way to winning a title."

With undisputed middleweight king Hopkins hoping to fight three more times before his expected retirement early next year, Gittlesohn believes that, because the Echols bout was an IBF eliminator, Ikeke will wind up with an alphabet belt strapped around his tiny but well-sculpted waist.

"If Hopkins beats Jermain Taylor in July, chances are Bernard will move up to fight the winner of the Antonio Tarver and Glen Johnson rematch," Gittlesohn said. "At this point of his career, Hopkins is not going to be dictated by the mandatories of the sanctioning bodies. If that happens, the IBF will have to strip Hopkins of his title, which means Kingsley and Sam Soliman will fight for the vacant title. If Taylor beats Hopkins, I understand that there is an immediate rematch clause that the IBF wouldn't sanction. So either way, Kingsley gets a chance to win a title very soon."

An even better scenario would be for either Taylor or Hopkins to get injured, so Ikeke could slip right in and take their place. In the past, Gittlesohn had prepared well for such a scenario. He declined the opportunity for Ikeke to appear as a contestant on *The Contender* because the contractual obligations of that show would have tied him up for at least a year. He also turned down a televised fight in order to have Ikeke appear in a non-televised preliminary bout on the HBO doubleheader featuring Hopkins vs. Howard Eastman and Taylor vs. Daniel Edouard at the Staples Center in Los Angeles in February.

"My reasons were twofold," said Gittlesohn. "If any of the main event fighters got injured, I would have done everything in my power to slip Kingsley in as a replacement. We would fight Hopkins or Taylor tomorrow if they'd agree to it. I also wanted the HBO people to see Kingsley, and he didn't disappoint them by scoring a fourth-round TKO of Marcos Primera. If ever a fighter was made for television, it's Kingsley."

Another coup was signing Ikeke to a promotional agreement with Golden Boy Promotions. Although the contract called for five fights in 18 months, Ikeke has already fought three times in six months.

"Being with Golden Boy has really improved our profile," said Oliveira. "It seems that finally, after all the years of sacrifice, Kingsley's time has come. I've been around a lot of fighters over the years, and believe me when I tell you nobody deserves it more. This guy is so honest, ethical, and hardworking, he gets annoyed when I curse around him. How many fighters do you have to watch your language in front of?"

"I don't look ahead, I only ask God to guide me," said Ikeke. "He makes the really important decisions. There are lots of good fights for me—Bernard Hopkins, Jermain Taylor, Ike Quartey from Ghana. I am ready for any of them, but things are not up to me. Whatever plans God has for me, we'll find out soon. I am as eager as everyone else to find out what those plans are." ■

Robert Mladinich is a New York-based freelance writer and a regular contributor to this magazine.

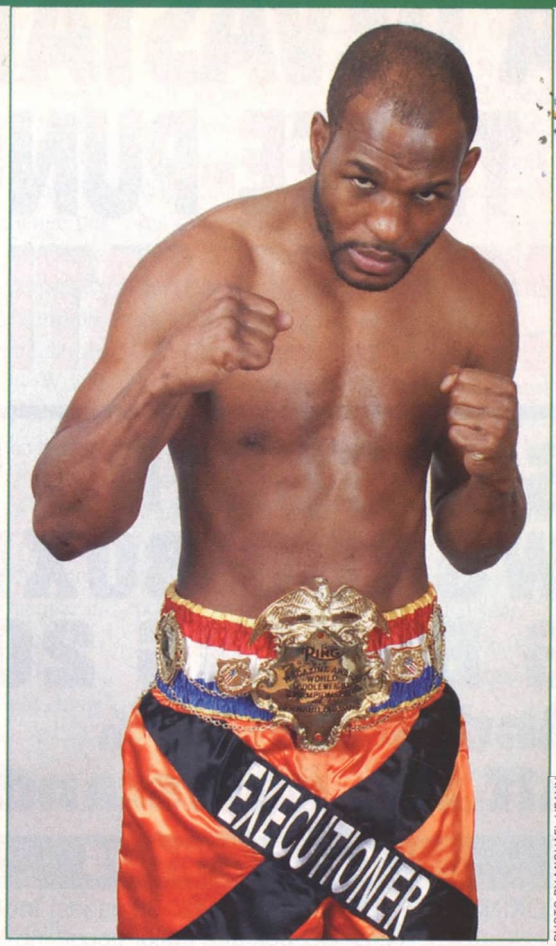


PHOTO BY MICHAEL HEAYN

Ikeke wants to fight the winner of the upcoming middleweight title bout between defending champion Bernard Hopkins (pictured) and challenger Jermain Taylor. But if that doesn't happen, Ikeke will probably settle for fighting for a less-prestigious alphabet belt.

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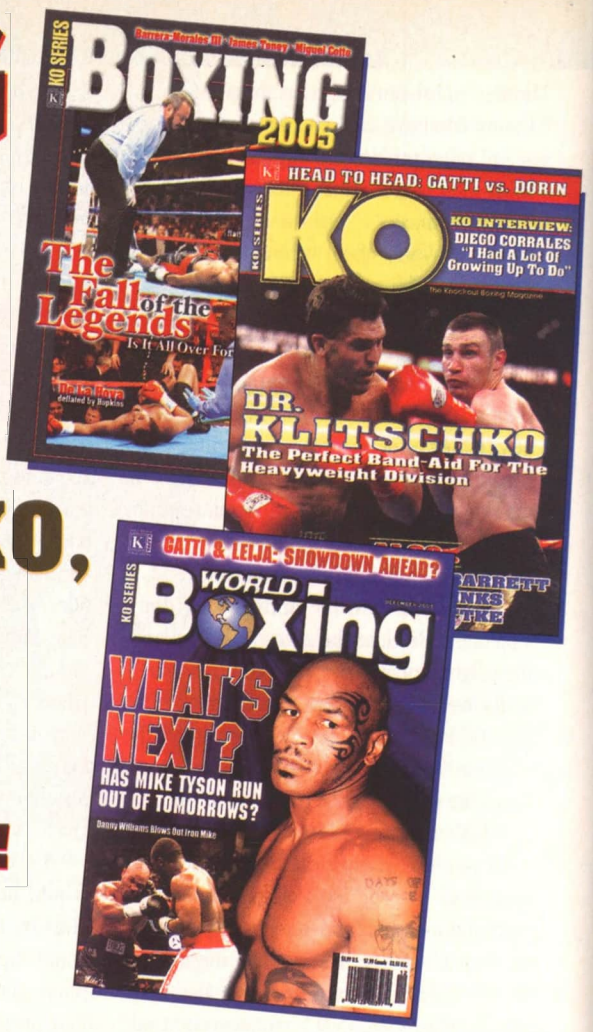

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New Face

(Continued from page 24)

homes after Lamont turned eight.

"The foster people treated us well. It was a lady and her nephew," said Lamont. "Then, after two years or so, our dad got out of jail and came and got us."

Mr. Peterson was able to find work, but with two jobs, he was hardly ever home.

"He'd leave the house at seven in the morning and not come home until 11 at night, so we hardly knew each other," said Peterson.

Once Lamont found boxing, things changed for the better.

"I was about eight when my cousin, boxer Antonio Reese, would bring gloves home when he visited. It made me want to do it."

Lamont, 11-0 (6), met his current trainer, Barry Hunter, while training at the Lincoln Multicultural Center in Washington about a year later. Hunter trained young fighters when he wasn't running his own construction company.

"Barry was like a second father to me," said Peterson. "A lot of guys my age ended up selling drugs because there was nothing else to do, but Barry and boxing kept me away from that. Barry taught me and my brother a lot about life. He even would feed us. Barry changed our lives. He'd pay our way to tournaments; he made me want to fight even more."

Said Hunter: "What Lamont's already been through in his life, you could already make a movie out of it. I could tell right away he was different. You didn't have to keep telling him over and over what to do in the ring. By the third time he would get it right. He was so quiet as a kid. If you got three words out of him in a training session, that was a lot. Usually, he'd just nod."

The individual nature of boxing also appealed to Peterson.

"I played football and basketball at Cardoza High, but in those sports you can give your all, train hard, but if your teammates don't have that team mindset, you can still lose. I like the one-on-one aspect of boxing; it's all on me. I like to win, so in boxing I can better control whether I win or lose."

Peterson won enough amateur trophies to fill a room, including the Junior Golden Gloves twice, in 1998 and 1999, and the Junior Olympics 2000 National and International championships at 132 pounds. He was also 2001 Golden Gloves National Champion at 132, Under-19 National Champion and Outstanding Boxer in 2003 at 139 pounds, and he won the U.S. Challenge in 2003. His victory in the Challenge put him on the U.S. team for the Pan Am Games in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, where he lost to the eventual champion, Patriz Lopez of Venezuela. But Lamont redeemed himself at the 2004 World Championships in France, beating the Pan-Am champ, though not winning the tournament. Peterson tried out for the U.S. Olympic team in 2004, but lost in a Box-off to Rock Allen in Cleveland, Ohio.

"I won the first round and landed some good shots," said Lamont. Most people in the arena thought Lamont won the fight, and the decision was booed lustily. In fact, it was on Peterson that the spotlight shone as he walked from the ring to the dressing room to a standing ovation.

"It was a political decision," said Hunter.

"I don't point fingers," said Lamont. "I took it as a learning experience, even though the decision hurt me emotionally."

It was after the Allen loss that Peterson turned professional, signing with manager Shelly Finkel, and from his first night of punching for pay, Peterson seemed to adjust well to the pros.

"I knew my style would fit," he said. "I throw a lot of bodyshots, which don't get scored much in the amateurs, and I like the thinking part of boxing, which you don't have as much of a chance to do in the short amateur fights.

"I consider my style as adapting to my opponent. I see what they do and pick spots to throw after I see what he's doing right or wrong. By the third round I open up. It's a thinking game; hit and don't get hit."

"Lamont is a tremendous prospect," Hunter said. "He has a lot of courage and is a solid human being. He trains four to five hours a day, while other kids are out clubbing or playing PlayStation. He's a skilled athlete. He thinks and breaks down his opponents quickly. He's like a coach in the ring; he's Michael Jordanesque in that way.

"Lamont outgrew the skills of kids his age so quickly that we had him sparring with pros since he was 14, 15 years old. He's sparred with Mark Johnson, Chop Chop Corley, William Joppy, and Daniel Attah, among others. He's even sparred with guys at 160, 168, 175 pounds, and heavyweight to learn defense."

That might help build a fighter's confidence, but, Hunter said, it could also work the other way. "Sometimes he tries risky things in the ring when he doesn't have to," the trainer said. "He sometimes gets false confidence."

"Lamont did real well sparring with me, but sometimes he thinks too much," said 140-pound contender Corley. "Barry would yell into the ring like 'Stop thinking; let Chop do the thinking.' But he'll be a champ some day. He needs to turn his punches over more, instead of punching with an open fist sometimes, in order to gain more power, but he'll learn how to do that soon."

Peterson's toughest fight so far was April 30, 2005, in Lula, Mississippi, against Orlando Soto.

"The guy was crafty," said Peterson. "He had already had 14 fights, so he knew what he was doing. I couldn't take him out, though I tried real hard. But I was happy to get the decision."

Next, fighting on short notice, he decisioned Mikel Williams in Choctaw, Mississippi, over six rounds, and fought on the Antonio Tarver-Glen Johnson undercard on June 18, in Memphis, Tennessee, scoring a first-round knockout of John Frazier.

"I see Lamont getting a title shot in two or three years," said Hunter, "and if he gets the chance, he'll win it."

And where does Peterson see himself in two to three years?

"I see myself as undisputed 140-pound champ," he said. "I want to beat the name guys in that division before they retire. I've fought a lot in Mississippi so far, so I'm kind of sneaking up on them. I want to fight 15 fights or so to prove myself, so when I challenge, I'll have a solid record; I won't be a joke."

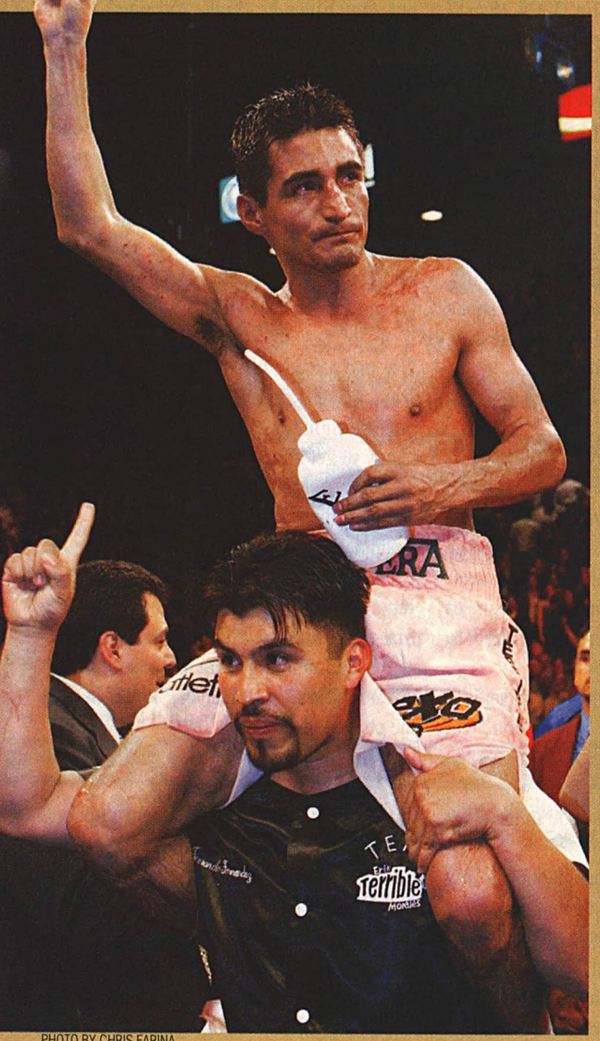
A good choice of words, since Lamont Peterson's life and the adversity he's overcome so far has been anything but a joke.

"In a way, I'm happy for having gone through what I've gone through growing up," he said. "It taught me patience. It made me stronger. I feel like there's nothing I can't overcome." ■

Mike Greenhill is a freelance writer and photographer based in Maryland and a frequent contributor to this magazine.

FOLLOWING THE MONEY

WHY ALL THE TOP FEATHER WEIGHTS ARE MOVING TO 130



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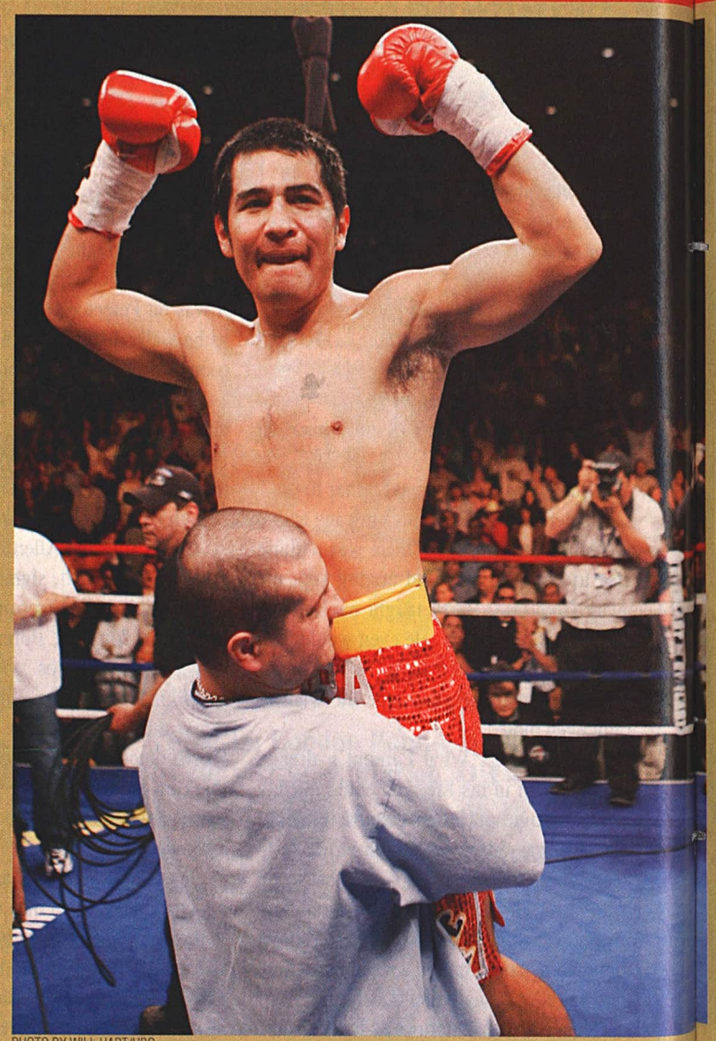

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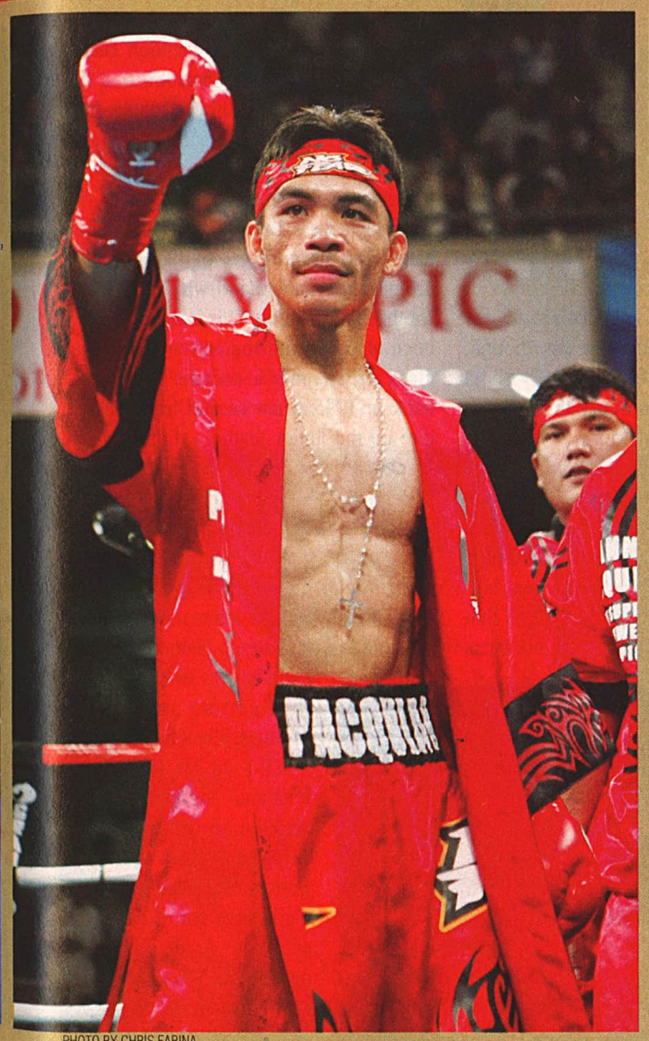

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Moving on up: Now that Pacquiao (third from the left) has joined Morales and Barrera at 130 pounds, can Marquez (above) be far behind. The addition of these former featherweight stars has not only made the junior lightweight class even stronger, it has also brought big-money bouts to the division.

By William Dettloff

Like great punchers, most great weight classes are born, not made. The heavyweights of the 1970s were born. The light heavyweights of the'80s were born. Today's junior welterweight division—born. It's hard to manufacture real greatness, or even the temporary kind, in weight classes and in prizefighters. In most cases, it either works out that way or it doesn't. You can make something good closer to great with a lot of work, or something good very good, but mostly it happens that way or it doesn't. It just shows up. But there are exceptions.

The junior lightweight division is something akin to great today and it didn't happen by some wonderful accident of nature. It was made that way because three of the four best featherweights have moved to junior lightweight and the fourth will too, provided he gets a fight with one of the other three. Marco Antonio Barrera has made junior lightweight great, and so too has Erik Morales and Manny Pacquiao, and, if the circumstances are right, Juan Manuel Marquez will contribute too.

The arrival at 130 of this fearsome group, with its attendant and bloody rivalries and deeply felt dramas, makes junior lightweight something like the welterweight division of the 1990s, when Oscar De La Hoya, Felix Trinidad, Pernell Whitaker, and Ike Quartey, pound-for-pound entrants each, jockeyed for position at the top of the heap. If you go back farther, you can compare it to the Leonard-Hagler-Hearns-Duran-Benitez carousel from a decade before, when they all chased one another around divisions from welterweight on up to super middle.

But great weight classes are almost never the invention of the sudden presence of a few well-heeled superstars. The new arrivals must have good, stubborn tenants to evict from the top before they can stake their claims on the penthouse. The rela-

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Besides the invasion of former featherweights, the 130-pound class has a new titleholder in Panamanian Vincente Mosquera (right), who won a hard-fought decision over Thailand's Yodsanan Nanthachai in April to annex the WBA belt.

tive value of those tenants also contributes to the division's worth. And several tough, gritty, blue-collar guys called 130 pounds their home well before the superstars showed up. You know who they are: Jorge Barrios, Jesus Chavez, Carlos Hernandez, Robbie Peden. Then there's Vincente Mosquera, who just decisioned Yodsanan Nanthachai to capture the WBA strap in a bristling punch-out. From top to bottom, this is a deep division.

The competition isn't what's made the stars at featherweight move up, though; like most things in life, it's largely about the money. You can surmise that, just on principle, Barrera and Morales will keep chasing one another until they're in the ground—rivalry drives men to do all sorts of things. Or you can guess that Pacquiao's people believe his speed and buzzsaw style will give him an edge over bigger, slower fighters. But the truth is that when a moneymaker moves up, his peers go up after him. Fighters follow the money. And once the top moneymaker makes the move, most of the time his weight class effectively empties out at the higher level. It's exactly what's happened here and the junior lightweight class has been made over as a result.

With this is mind, we thought it would be instructive to look at the stars who have made the move to 130 pounds and another who may: where they came from, where they are now, and where they're going. It's a wonderful division full of possibilities, the same possibilities that previously made featherweight a fight fan's playground.

MARCO ANTONIO BARRERA

Where he's been: When you realize how long Barrera, 60-4 (42), has been around, you understand why he's a lock for the Hall of Fame. This is a guy who has been at or around the top of his chosen class for roughly a decade. It was way back in 1995 when he and his left hook tore up the junior featherweight division. The consecutive losses to Junior Jones in '96 and '97 hurt, but he'd gotten it together by going into that first brilliant brawl with Morales, and the way it ended, the loss probably helped him more than anything. Don't we all feel like idiots now for thinking he'd lose to Naseem Hamed, and then there he was two fights after that getting revenge on Morales, albeit barely.

Did we see the loss to Pacquiao coming? Hell no. And we all cranked out the eulogies when it was over. Barrera responded by beating the bejesus out of hardheaded Paulie Ayala and whipping Morales outright in their rubber match. His blowout of alphabet mandatory Mzonke Fana last April was exemplary of just how good he is; he had a guy in front of him who wasn't in his class and he all but vaporized him.

Where he is now: At the top of the junior lightweight division. You can make the case that it should be Morales because Morales beat Pacquiao who beat

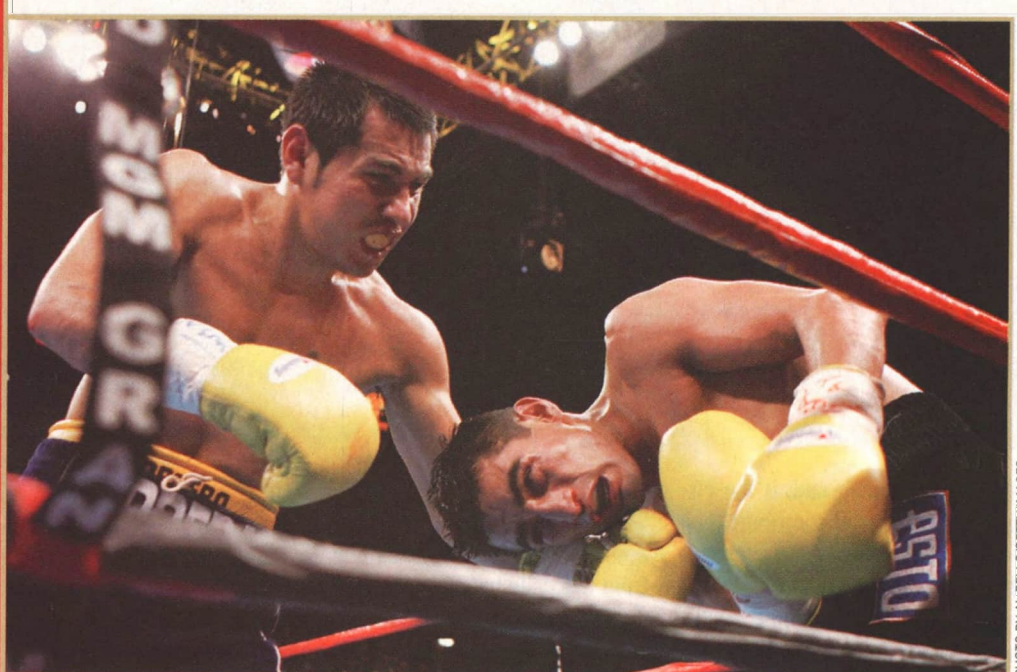

PHOTO BY AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

Barrera has Morales under fire along the ropes in their third fight, which went to Barrera by a narrow but clear-cut decision. Their trilogy was one of the fiercest in boxing history and helped the smaller weight divisions establish themselves as pay-per-view attractions. Will there be a fourth fight between the Mexican icons?

Barrera, but Barrera whipped Morales straight up in their third fight. The bottom line is he holds two wins over the only guy you could even consider rating above him. That's enough for us.

What's next: An interesting match in September with Aussie Robbie Peden, who surprised many with his repeat win over Nate Campbell in February. As he showed while lasting 10 rounds with Marquez in March 2002, Peden is tough and willing, but should be outgunned against Barrera.

The fight we want to see: Provided he gets past Peden (we think he will), how about a rematch with Pacquiao? It's a natural, provided Pacquiao passes a reasonable test at junior lightweight in his first outing since losing to Morales. It answers a couple of important questions; namely, was Barrera's loss to Pacquiao in their first match simply an off-night, as Barrera insists, or does Pacquiao have Barrera's number? And what, if anything, did the Morales fight take out of Pacquiao? Want another good reason? It sets up Barrera-Morales IV.

ERIK MORALES

Where he's been: The best thing about Morales, 48-2 (34), is not his straight right hand or his granite chin or his combinations. The reason to love Morales is he'll fight anybody. Like Barrera, his nemesis, he's a promoter's dream. Point him at the top guys in his division and let him go, and before you know it he's up in the mountains of Mexico doing roadwork and banging his sparring partners all over the ring. He's all fighter.

Which is your favorite Morales fight? The title win over Daniel Zaragoza in '97? Maybe his domination of Wayne McCullough two years later. Maybe you like his three wars with Barrera best, or his one-sided beat-down of Ayala. Maybe you liked the battles with Chavez or Hernandez. There are so many to choose from. The guy is never in a bad fight.

There was a period, of course, when we thought Morales was about done. It was in 2001 when he struggled in consecutive fights against Guty Espadas and Injin Chi, decision wins that could have gone the other way. But he righted himself with the close loss to Barrera in their rematch and then the drubbing of Ayala. The ultimate proof that he's fearless? He takes on Pacquiao, who had annihilated the very same Barrera to whom Morales had just lost. You have to love him.

Where he is now: He's rated right behind Barrera, but firmly above everyone else. He's already beaten Hernandez, Chavez, and Pacquiao, three of the top guys. There's not much more he can do to solidify his standing as the second best guy in the division, outside of beating Mosquera or Barrios. There's only one guy between him and the title.

What's next: Nothing was scheduled as of press time, but there are any number of interesting possibilities. (Again, it's a deep division.) Morales can rematch with Chavez, who in June won a sizzling war with Hernandez. Their first fight was a bruiser despite an injury to Chavez' right shoulder, and we all recall how badly Chavez hurt Morales before his arm went out. Chavez' win over Hernandez created

PHOTO BY AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

Even though he lost their most recent encounter on a majority decision, Morales fought well enough that the bout was selected as THE RING's 2004 Fight of the Year. A fourth fight between the popular Mexicans would surely be another box-office bonanza.

good buzz and could get him the rematch he's been seeking.

The fight we want to see: The obvious answer is Barrera and that's always a possibility with these guys, but a more realistic pick might be Barrios. Morales has a tendency to fight down a bit to his opponent's level. Did the fights with Hernandez and Chavez have to be so brutal, or did Morales make them that way? That could be dangerous against Barrios. Since losing a war to Acelino Freitas in '03, Barrios has run off four straight wins, including a rout of highly touted Mike Anchondo in April.

MANNY PACQUIAO

Where he's been: Many of us first saw Pacquiao, 39-3-2 (31), in 2001 when he blasted the daylights out of poor Lehlohonolo Ledwaba to win the IBF junior featherweight belt. But he'd been around a while already, having won the WBC flyweight title against Chatchai Sasakul back in '98. That's right—flyweight. Pacquiao is a little guy. Smaller than Barrera and Morales, smaller than any of the guys he'll see at 130 pounds.

This is a guy who is fighting 18 pounds over the weight at which he won his first title. Now, 18 pounds to us might be no big deal—maybe that's a night out at a steak house. But 18 pounds to a flyweight is 16 percent of his total body weight. It's like Bernard Hopkins fighting at 185. Either way, the extra weight didn't hurt Pacquiao all the way up to 126. In fact, he lost the flyweight belt on the scales in '99 and then skipped the junior bantam and bantamweight classes and exploded at junior featherweight, where he destroyed Ledwaba in his breakout fight.

Since then, Pacquiao has decimated those you'd have expected him to—Jorge Julio, Fashan Por Thawatchai, Emanuel Lucero—and had mixed results with the elite: the blowout of Barrera, the draw with Marquez, and a clear loss to Morales.

Where he is now: As we went to press Pacquiao was about to officially relinquish THE RING featherweight championship belt he'd won by beating Barrera. We'll place him in the top five at 130, depending on who he fights at junior lightweight and how soon. Legal and promotional entanglements could delay a meaningful fight.

What's next: We don't expect Pacquiao to come right back in another huge fight. Though he had his moments, Morales beat him fairly comprehensively and rushing into another big fight against one of the division's bigger guns probably wouldn't be the wisest thing to do. Look for a match against a top-15 type before Pacquiao's team starts to beat the drums for another big showdown.

The fight we want to see: Who wouldn't want to see Pac-Man against Marquez again or Barrera? Or Morales, so long as Pacquiao was wearing Reyes gloves (if you believe Freddie Roach's surprisingly lame excuse for his fighter's loss)? But here's the one we like: Pacquiao against Chavez. Who backs up? Neither. Who misses a punch? Neither. Whose chin or skin gives out first? Who knows? Pacquiao's faster and the harder hitter, Chavez is bigger and a proven tough guy. What a fight.

PHOTO BY DONALD MIRALLE/GETTY IMAGES

Pacquiao rips Morales with a right hand during their thrilling slugfest in March 2005. Although Morales prevailed, Pac-Man's exciting style and the give-and-take nature of their fight has kept the Filipino in the mix, especially now he's decided to move up to the junior lightweight division and join Barrera and Morales.

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

Marquez flattens Victor Polo's face with a flush left en route to defending the IBF and WBA featherweight belts. If he can get a lucrative fight with Barrera, Morales, or Pacquiao, Marquez has said he will also move up in weight.

JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ

Where he's been: We should say upfront that Marquez, 44-2-1 (33), is still a featherweight beltholder as of this writing, but Ricardo Jimenez at Top Rank, Marquez' promoter, told THE RING that for a fight against Morales, Barrera, or a rematch with Pacquiao, he'd move up. Interestingly, he's the only one of this quartet who didn't start out at junior featherweight or below. Marquez started at 126 pounds—with a loss, by the way—and here he is 12 years later still a featherweight, and the best one there is. Maybe you couldn't say that when Barrera, Morales, and Pacquiao were still at 126, but you can say it now. In some ways, staying put is the best move.

It seems odd now to recall that Marquez lost to the less talented Freddie Norwood, which he did in their showdown in '99. But it seemed to help him. Never a huge puncher, he subsequently went on a 10-fight knockout streak, stopping, among others, Peden, Reynante Jamili, Manuel Medina, Marcos Licona, and Hector Marquez before his epic battle with Pacquiao. If there ever were questions about Marquez' grit or ability to fight his way back into what appeared to be a losing effort, he answered them by climbing off the canvas three times in the first round and gaining a draw.

You could be forgiven for thinking that the struggle with Pacquiao took all the starch out of him, as in his next fight, against Orlando Salido, Marquez looked mediocre. It was a cautious, at times tedious affair, even for Marquez, who from all appearances prizes patience in the ring more than most. But he took care of business the way he's always done it, and the next time out was back to his old self.

Where he is now: At the top of the featherweight rankings. His precise dissection of tough veteran Victor Polo in May was typical Marquez—cool, methodical, and highly cerebral. He was quicker, stronger, and simply more efficient and he broke the game Polo down over the distance to score a wide decision win. He never came close to stopping him, even with a knockdown he scored in the seventh with a textbook right hand, but that's not what Marquez is about. He's about using his head and doing things the right way in the ring and slowly taking his man apart. If you like concussions he's not your guy—try Pacquiao—but if you like watching a real mechanic in there, watch Marquez.

What's next: If nothing happens with Morales, Barrera, or Pacquiao, look for Marquez to stay at 126 and face Scott Harrison. There are other options too. Featherweight is still a solid if rather depleted division, with Rocky Juarez, Chi, and Chris John near the top. Realistically, we think Marquez could stay there for several years and make quite a nice living turning back one challenger after another. But we're hoping he doesn't.

The fight we want to see: Can you see it? Marquez-Morales? We'd take Marquez-Barrera too, but something tells us that might turn out to be more of a boxing match and less a barnburner. Morales likes nothing better these days than to get right on his guy and start banging out straight right hands, and Marquez would be right there in front of him, looking to slip and counter. If we could pick any fight to be made at 130 pounds, this would be the one. ■

SUMMARY

HEAVYWEIGHTS

John Ruiz No-Contest 12 James Toney
(Retains WBA Title)
Lamon Brewster KO 1 Andrew Golota
Kevin McBride KO 6 Mike Tyson
DaVarryl Williamson KO 2 Derrick Jefferson
Vassiliy Jirov W 10 Troy Beets
Paolo Vidoz W 12 Timo Hoffmann
Nicolay Valuev KO 3 Clifford Etienne
Oliver McCall W 8 Kevin Hale
Shannon Briggs KO 3 Abraham Okine
Danny Williams KO 3 Zoltan Petranyi
Audley Harrison KO 7 Robert Davis
Kirk Johnson Tech. Win 5 Yanqui Diaz
Malcolm Tann W 8 Derek Bryant
Victor Bisbal KO 2 Victor James
Alexander Povetkin KO 2 Muhammed Ali
Scott Gammer KO 8 Mark Krence
Luan Krasniqi KO 6 Lance Whitaker
Juan Carlos Gomez KO 5 George Arias

CRUISERWEIGHTS

O'Neil Bell W 12 Dale Brown
(Wins Vacant IBF Title)
Alexander Gurov KO 2 Marcelo Ferreira
Guillermo Jones KO 4 Kelvin Davis
Arthur Williams KO 3 Ali Supreme
Darnell Wilson W 8 Rodney Moore
William Guthrie KO 1 Preston Kenney
Jose Cruz Rivas W 12 Gustavo Arroyo
Mohamed Azzaoui KO 5 Brett Smith
Ismail Abdoul W 8 Ramdane Serdjane
Alexander Petkovic W 8 Roberto Coelho
Lasse Johansen W 12 Lubos Suda
David Quinonero KO 2 Janos Somogyi
Danny Batchelder W 10 Arthur Williams

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Super middleweight Alejandro Garcia stings Rhoshii Wells

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS

Tomasz Adamek W 12
Paul Briggs, Chicago, Illinois
(Wins Vacant WBC Title)
Julio Gonzalez Tech. Win 6 Montell Griffin
Allan Green Tech. Win 7 Rocky Smith
Kenny Ellis KO 6 Aaron Norwood
Paul Murdoch KO 4 Sakeasi Dakua
Peter Venancio KO 9 Mario Soares
Orlando Rivera W 8 Hector Sanjurjo
James Johnson KO 2 Larry Russell

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Mikkel Kessler W 12 Anthony Mundine
(Retains WBA title)
Joe Calzaghe KO 6 Mario Veit
Lucian Bute KO 8 Jose Spearman
Randy Griffin W 10 Ronald Weaver
Stjepan Bozic W 12 Nader Hamdan
Peter Kariuki Ngateri KO 1 Juarne Dowling
Larry Marks KO 4 Rudy Lovato
Henry Buchanan KO 4 Shannon Miller
Laila Ali KO 3 Erin Toughill

MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Winky Wright W 12 Felix Trinidad
Dirk Dzemski KO 9 Said Yazidu
Kelly Pavlik KO 1 Daniel Neal
Sergio Mora W 7 Peter Manfredo Jr.
Jimmy Lange W 5 Tarick Salmaci
Jeff Fraza W 5 Brent Cooper
Ishe Smith W 5 Anthony Bonsante
Alfonso Gomez W 5 Jesse Brinkley
Jose Luis Lopez KO 7 Alberto Mercedes
Marcos Primera KO 4 Carlos De Leon Jr.
Yuri Foreman W 8 Kevin Cagle
Peter Manfredo Jr. Tech. Win 5 Joey Gilbert
Peter Manfredo Jr. W 7 Alfonso Gomez
Sergio Mora W 7 Jesse Brinkley
Anthony Thompson W 8 Jerome Ellis
Jesse Brinkley KO 5 Anthony Bonsante
John Duddy W 8 Patrick Thompson

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Alejandro Garcia KO 9 Rhoshii Wells
Rodney Jones W 12 Teddy Reid
Darrell Woods W 12 Emmett Linton
Mihaly Kotai W 12 Raul Eduardo Bejarano
Vanes Martirosyan KO 1 Jovanni Rubio
Mark Suarez KO 6 Viktor Sydorenko
Marco Antonio Rubio KO 8 Grady Brewer
Archak TerMeliksetian KO4 Clarence Taylor
Manuel Gomez D 10 Jesus Soto Karaas
Sechew Powell KO 1 Cornelius Bundrage
Andre Berto KO1 Tim Himes
Tobia Giuseppe Loriga W 12 Serge Vigne

WELTERWEIGHTS

Zab Judah KO 3 Cosme Rivera
(Retains World Title)
Oktay Urkal W 12 Frederic Klose
Sharmba Mitchell Tech. Win 5
Christopher Smith
David Diaz KO 3 Tyrone Wiggins
Jose Luis Lopez KO 7 Alberto Mercedes
Carlos Baldomir W 12 Miguel Rodriguez
Julio Cesar Chavez W 10 Ivan Robinson
Demetrius Hopkins W 8 Roberto Valenzuela
Delvin Rodriguez KO 2 Christopher Henry
Joshua Okine KO 12 David Barnes
Mary Jo Sanders W 10 Belinda Laracuente

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS

Ricky Hatton KO 11 Kostya Tszyu
(Wins World Title)
Miguel Angel Cotto KO 9 Mohamad Abdulaev
Julio Diaz KO 1 Marco Angel Perez
Steve Forbes W 10 Marteze Logan
Raul Balbi W 10 Carlos Adan Jerez
Randall Bailey W 10 Roberto Carlos Ortega
Kendall Holt W 12 Jaime Rangel
Ben Tackie W 8 Edwin Algarin
Samuel Malinga D 12 Lawrence Ngobeni
Julio Cesar Chavez Jr. KO 1 Adam Wynant
Dimitriy Salita KO 8 Louis Brown
Lee McAllister KO 3 Karl Taylor
Julio Cesar Garcia W 12 Alvaro Aguilar
Lamont Peterson W 6 Mikel Williams
Anthony Peterson KO 6 Wayne Fletcher
Massimo Bertozzi W 10 Domenico Restuccia

LIGHTWEIGHTS

Diego Corrales KO 10 Jose Luis Castillo
(Wins World Title)
Almazbek Raiymkulov D 12 Joel Casamayor
Jose Armando Santa Cruz KO 4
Ernesto Zavala
Sirimongkol Singwangcha KO 7 Michael Clark
Edwin Valero KO 1
Hernan Abraham Valenzuela
Laszlo Bognar W 12 Valery Kharyanov
Kazuki Kubota W 10 Kokichi Tanaka

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS

Vicente Mosquera W 12
Yodsanan Nanthachai
(Wins WBA Title)
Jesus Chavez W 12 Carlos Hernandez
Francisco Lorenzo W 10 Nate Campbell
Aldo Valtierra KO 9 Frankie Zepeda
Ceasar Amonsot W 10 Leed Shabu
Kenji Yoshimura Tech. Win 8
Rud 4K'Kevkatche
Verquan Kimbrough KO 4 Antonio Young

FEATHERWEIGHTS

Juan Manuel Marquez W 12 Victor Polo
(Retains WBA/IBF Titles)
Scott Harrison KO 4 Michael Brodie
Bernard Dunne W 10 Yuri Voronin
Nicky Cook KO 2 Dazzo Williams

Junior bantamweight Luis Perez digs a right into Luis Bolano

PHOTO BY ED MULHOLLAND

Roynet Caballero KO 3 Sergio González
Juan Gerardo Cabrera W 12
Ricardo Fabricio Chamorro
Gamaliel Diaz KO 9 Naoto Fujiwara
Kinji Amano D 10 Jimrex Jaca
Noe Bolanos KO 6 Azael Loera
Phillips Payne KO 10 William Abelyan
Orlando Sitohang W 12 Ronaldi Kapughu
Yober Ortega W 10 Ernesto Vasquez
Terdsak Jandaeng W 12 Jake Verano
Jose Rojas KO 3 Roberto Rodriguez
Zsolt Nagy KO 4 Csaba Ladányi
Cristobal Cruz KO 6 Francisco Dianzo

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS

Mahyar Monshipour KO 6 Shigeru Nakazato
(Retains WBA Title)
Israel Vazquez W 12 Armando Guerrero
(Retains IBF Title)
Sergio Manuel Medina KO 4
Daniel Darío Ojeda
Mahyar Monshipour KO 6 Shigeru Nakazato
Felix Machado W 10 Dioberto Julio
Jhonny Gonzalez W 10 Adolfo Landeros
Heriberto Ruiz W 10 Eduardo Garcia
Saenghiran Lookbanyai KO 3 Jun Magsipoc
Gabula Vabaza W 10 Jess Maca
Celestino Caballero KO 5 Jose Luis Valbuena
Danny Romero D 8 Alex Baba

BANTAMWEIGHTS

Rafael Marquez W 12 Ricardo Vargas
(Retains IBF Title)
Poonsawat Kratingdaenggym W 12
Joel Bauya
Simpiwe Vetyeka KO 7 Luthando Maqolo
Genaro Garcia W 10 Gerardo Espinoza
Teerapong Distar W 12 Nathan Barcelona
Bettina Csabi W 10 Oksana Vasilyeva
Hugo Vargas W 12 Ramon Leyte
Zolile Mbityi W 8 Zolani Petelo
Simphiwe Vetyeka KO 7 Luthando Maqolo

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS

Luis Perez KO 6 Luis Bolano
(Retains IBF Title)
Jose Navarro KO 3 Miguel Del Valle
José Jiménez KO 6 Darwin Zambrano
Hiroshi Yoshiyama KO 2
Panomdej Or Yuthanakorn

FLYWEIGHTS

Hussein Hussein W 10 Evaristo Primero
Anis Ceunfin W 12 Panca Silaban
Carlos Murillo D 10 Jonathan Aguilar
Angky Angkota KO 1 Rocky Fuentes

JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS

Will Grigsby W 12 Victor Burgos
(Wins IBF Title)
Hugo Cazares Tech. Win 10 Nelson Dieppa
Brian Viloria KO 6 Ruben Contreras
Kaichon Sor Vorapin Tech. Win 5
Carlo Besales
Javier Tello W 10 Erick Aguilera
Fabio Marfa W 10 La Syukur
Freddy Beleño W 12 Alejandro Ordonez
Juhee Kim KO 2 Madayda Kidsolan
Sang Hee Kang W 8 Shigeki Ichinomiya

STRAWWEIGHTS

Ivan Calderon KO 8 Noel Tunacao
Juan Jose Landaeta W 12 Carlos Melo
Nethra Sasiprapa W 6 Pieter Nesi

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The RING

FIGHTER *of the* MONTH

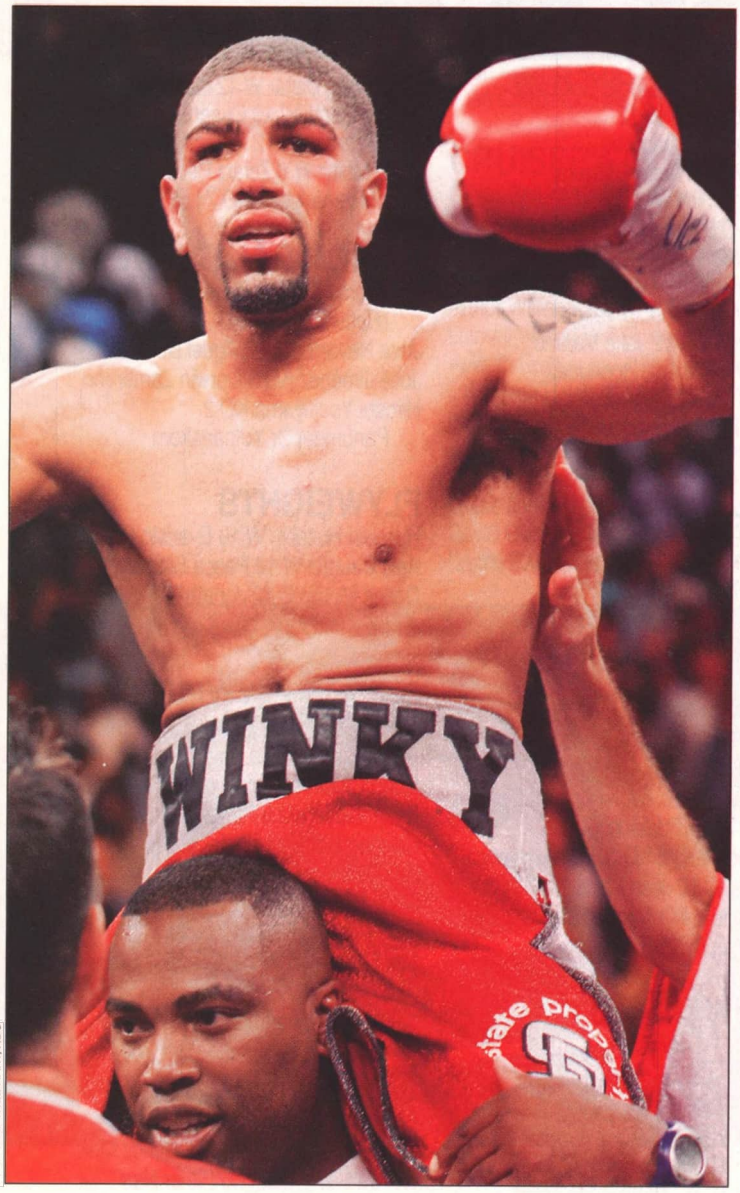


PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

It wasn't easy naming someone other than Diego Corrales the Fighter of the Month. In an almost superhuman performance, "Chico" survived one of the most thrilling, grueling fights of all-time, got off the canvas twice, and won the lightweight championship of the world by knockout. It's hard to argue with that.

But it's even harder to argue with perfection.

Winky Wright's showing against Felix Trinidad one week after Corrales' win over Jose Luis Castillo was about as close to complete pugilistic perfection as you'll ever see. This wasn't Morrade Hakkar that Wright was in with; this was "Tito" Trinidad, a first-ballot Hall of Famer with only one loss on his 43-fight dossier. A victory for Wright wasn't entirely unexpected, of course. But a shutout victory was. The lefty arguably won all 12 rounds against the Puerto Rican living legend, controlling nearly every second of the fight with his unrelenting jab. When it was over, Wright had landed *five times* as many punches as Trinidad, totally shutting down one of the game's most fearsome offensive arsenals.

If you prefer high drama, then it's hard to beat what Corrales did. But this isn't the Fight of the Month we're talking about; it's the *Fighter* of the Month, and as far as we're concerned, that designation goes to Winky Wright.

Winky Wright

RINGSIDE REPORTS

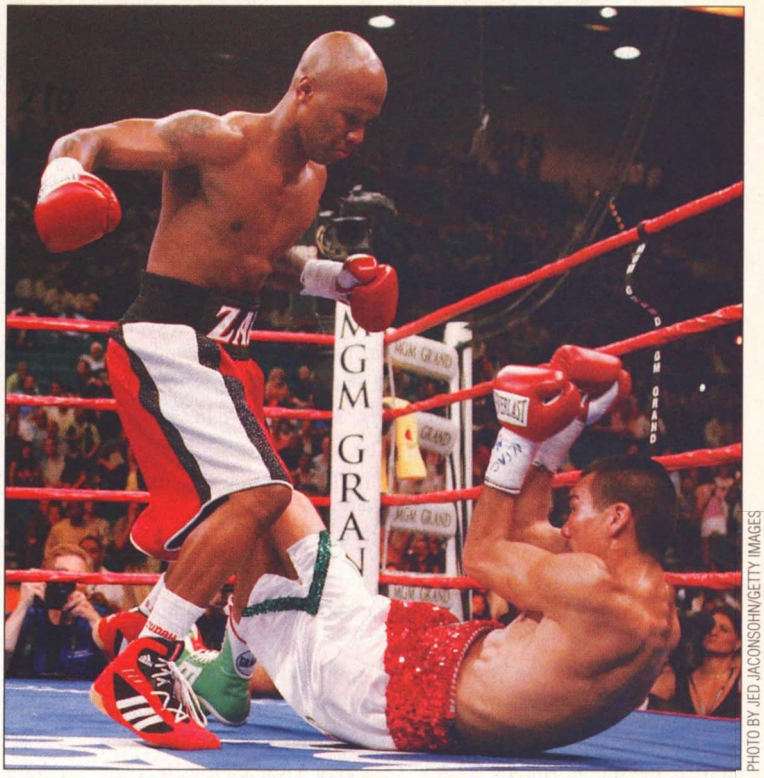


PHOTO BY JED JACONSOHN/GETTY IMAGES

Judah has no trouble rolling over Rivera for third-round kayo

Zab Judah KO 3 Cosme Rivera

Las Vegas, Nevada: IBF number-one contender Rivera proved to be yet another prime argument against alphabet mandatories. Judah chose to take this relatively meaningless fight rather than let himself be stripped of one of his belts, and he knocked Rivera down twice in the first and then once in the third to get the TKO win and remain the undisputed welterweight champion.

This fight on the Winky Wright-Felix Trinidad undercard was Judah's first at the MGM Grand Garden Arena since his disastrous loss to Kostya Tszyu in 2001. "I wanted to give a world championship performance to help put that behind me," Judah said, continuing to apologize for his violent behavior after that fight.

There was nothing anyone could criticize about this performance from Judah, 146½, Brooklyn, New York. Rivera, 146, Los Angeles, California, had never been down or stopped in his career, but Judah walked straight out in the opening round and, right away, caught Rivera with a clean left hand, set up by his southpaw right jab, that sent Rivera, 28, to the canvas. Rivera climbed up, but he was still dazed.

Judah jumped back on him with a flurry of punches that sent him down again. Rivera got up on his feet again, and it looked like Judah, 27, only had to hit him once and the fight would have been over. Judah, however, took his time and moved away from Rivera, as if to say, "I can hurt you whenever I please."

Even though Rivera, 28-8-2 (20), got through a very tough opening round, he was still hurt. Rivera, a tall, stand-up fighter, could not figure out Judah's awkward southpaw style, and Judah, 34-2 (25), played with Rivera in the second round, moving and boxing on the outside.

Judah, making his first defense of THE RING title he won from Cory Spinks, started the third just like the second, jabbing and moving. But just as Rivera was throwing a left jab, Judah threw a left uppercut to Rivera's chin that almost took his head off. Referee Joe Cortez (USA) stayed close, as he knew Rivera was badly hurt. Judah threw a flurry of punches that just grazed Rivera, but he went down and the referee stepped in to call a halt to the bout at 2:11 of round three.

"This was not a fight I picked. It was a mandatory," Judah said, overlooking the fact that he could have easily just given up this belt if he really didn't want to waste his time with Rivera. "I want Oscar De La Hoya, [Antonio] Margarito, or [Shane] Mosley. It would be an honor to fight any of these fighters to prove I am the best fighter in the world. Bring me anybody. I can knock out anybody because I am very focused right now. This is the new Zab Judah. I have grown up a lot. Don King has helped me mature. The sky is the limit if I stay focused. I am a solid, well-seasoned, poised veteran."

Television: HBO PPV

Promoter: Don King Productions, Gary Show Promotions

(5-14-05)

Wayne McCullough

Will Grigsby W 12 Victor Burgos

Las Vegas, Nevada: Burgos is an aggressive fighter who tries to wear down his opponents, but it's hard to wear down what you can't hit. Against Grigsby, he found it difficult to pin down the elusive former titleholder and was outboxed and hurt a few times en route to

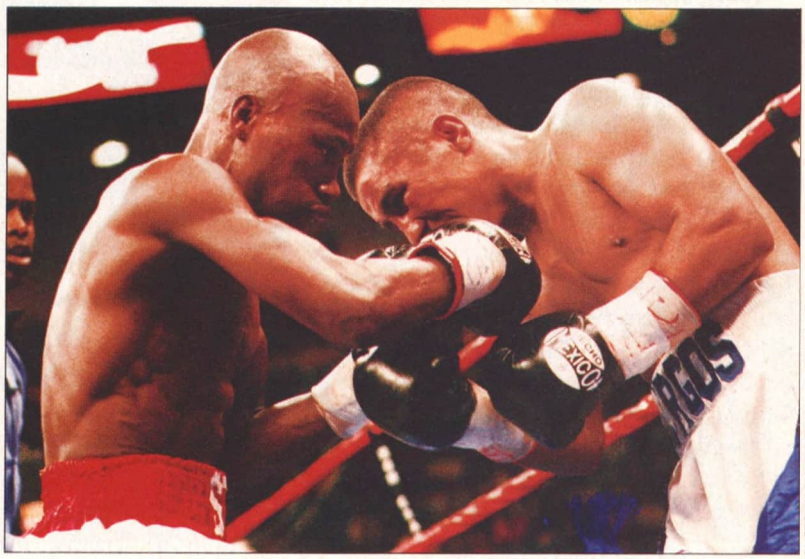


PHOTO BY JED JACOBSOHN/GETTY IMAGES

Grigsby finds Burgos with a right en route to winning IBF junior fly strap

Grigsby winning a unanimous points decision. Burgos' IBF junior flyweight title reign ended in his third defense, as Grigsby picked up the IBF belt for the second time in his career. Grigsby has had long breaks throughout this career, including over a year in prison, but in this bout, just his third fight back after being away for 2½ years, he fought as if he had never left.

In the first three rounds, Grigsby, who first won the 108-pound strap in December '98 and lost it to the great Ricardo Lopez 10 months later, took control and danced around the ring using his quick and accurate left jabs, keeping the unrelenting Burgos off-balance. Burgos, 107, Puebla, Mexico, was throwing mostly wild shots that missed the target. Grigsby, 106, St. Paul, Minnesota, would wait for Burgos to throw his overhand right, step to the side, and land clean left hooks to Burgos' chin. The fans at the MGM Grand Garden Arena were not pleased with the little men in the first few rounds, as evidenced by their booing.

Burgos, 31, got closer to Grigsby, 35, in the fourth and unloaded with left hooks to the head and body. For a moment it knocked Grigsby's rhythm off, but he soon got back to his slick counterpunching.

Grigsby almost had Burgos down on a few occasions, rocking him with clean straight lefts and rights in the seventh. Burgos took all the shots thrown at him and fought straight back. In the final four rounds, the shorter Burgos, 37-14-3 (22), kept pushing Grigsby, 18-2-1 (7) with 1 no-contest, and held his own down the stretch. But the Mexican had fallen too far behind, and all three American judges scored for Grigsby. Joe Pasquale had it 117-111, Adalaide Byrd saw it 116-112, and Robert Hoyle scored it 118-110. THE RING's score was 116-112. The referee was Kenny Bayless (USA),

Television: HBO PPV

Promoter: Don King Productions, Gary Show Promotions

(5-14-05)

Wayne McCullough

Hozumi Hasegawa W 12 Veerapol Sahaprom

Tokyo, Japan: A title reign that began in 1998 finally ended, as did a 10-year, 45-fight unbeaten streak, when southpaw speedster Hasegawa, 118, Japan, upset 36-year-old Thailander Veerapol Sahaprom, 118, to capture the WBC bantam throne. Hasegawa gamely mixed it up with the longtime beltholder from the outset, withstood his persistent retaliation in the middle rounds, and swept rounds nine through 11 to win a unanimous decision over 12 heats at Nihon Budokan, a Japanese martial arts hall. Judge Duane Ford (USA) scored it 116-112, and Gale Van Hoy (USA) and Burt Clements (USA) both had it 115-113, all for the more aggressive challenger. The referee was Guadalupe Garcia (Mexico).

The 24-year-old Hasegawa's youth, speed, and big heart accounted for the upset result. Veerapol, making his 15th defense, attempted to overcome an early points deficit by aiming at the breadbasket of the Japanese speedster, and all three judges had the fight scored 76-76 after the eighth session. But Hasegawa, 12 years junior at 24, displayed his fighting spirit and effectively shook up the Thailander with a fusillade of punches in the 10th. Though Veerapol took the final round with his desperate rallies, it was too late to prevent the defeat.

Hasegawa, once called a Japanese Pernell Whitaker, made a good start as he swarmed over the cautious Veerapol with sharp combinations in the first round. Veerapol didn't really get untracked until the fourth, when he opened a cut over the challenger's left eyebrow with a legal blow. Veerapol, who hadn't tasted defeat since losing to Nana Konadu in 1995, shifted his focus to the speedster's midsection in the sixth. His change of strategy seemed to pay off, as the Thai veteran took the next three rounds.

But in the ninth, the Japanese lefty fought toe-to-toe and successfully outpunched the formidable titlist with precision. Hasegawa showed his best in the 10th, when he almost toppled Veerapol with a looping right hook following a southpaw left. The final stanza was a war, since Veerapol, aware that he was behind on points, desperately attempted to score a knockout.

Southpaw Hasegawa, 18-2 (5), is young and still improving with every fight. Should he gain more power without losing his speed, he may enjoy a lengthy reign, as he is blessed with good defensive reflexes. But Hasegawa turned so aggressive against Veerapol, 47-2-2 (33), that he amazed the audience as well as his opponent with his remarkable work rate. The crestfallen Thailander praised his conqueror and asked for a rematch.

Promoter: Akihiko Honda's Teiken Promotions

(4-16-05)

Joe Koizumi

PHOTO BY KAZUHIRO NOGI/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

A surprisingly aggressive Hasegawa (left) upsets Veeraphol for WBC bantam belt

Yutaka Niida W 12 Jaewon Kim

Tokyo, Japan: In the co-feature to Hasegawa-Veerapol, top strawweight Niida, 105, Japan, retained the WBA belt as he cleverly kept counterpunching onrushing Korean challenger Kim, 105, and finished strong to win a wide verdict over 12 fast rounds. Judge Francisco Martinez (New Zealand) scored it 117-112, Pinit Prayadsab (Thailand) had it 118-110, and Arkom Wannasit (Thailand) saw the

PHOTO BY KAZUHIRO NOGI/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Niida (left) counterpunched his way to a unanimous decision over Won

fight 119-111, all in favor of the shorter but more powerful Niida. The referee was Mark Nelson (USA).

Kim tried to force the action from the start, but Niida, making his second defense of his second reign, averted his shots and countered well with solid rights and left hooks in the first round. The Korean threw more punches all the way, but Niida remained cool enough to counter him with overhand rights and looping left hooks.

Kim seemingly took the initiative in the sixth and seventh with his higher work rate. But Niida, who dethroned Venezuelan Noel Arambulet in July '04, turned loose from the eighth on, battering Kim with combinations to the face and the midsection. Kim, 19-2-2 (6), the same age as his opponent at 26, showed his heart but not his finesse, while Niida, 18-1-3 (8), won handily without turning in his finest performance.

Promoter: Akihiko Honda's Teiken Promotions

(4-16-05)

Joe Koizumi

Juan Manuel Marquez W 12 Victor Polo

Las Vegas, Nevada: When two counterpunchers meet, the result is usually a distance fight. That's precisely what we got when Marquez fought Polo at the Mandalay Bay Events Center in the co-feature to Diego Corrales-Jose Luis Castillo. The two featherweights counterpunched each other for 12 long rounds, with the faster, more precise Marquez earning a wide decision on all three cards to retain the WBA and IBF straps.

"Without a doubt, I am a great boxer. He's also a great boxer. I thought it was a good tactical match more than anything tonight," Marquez said afterward. "I was very confident coming in. After the second round, I felt that I had it. It was just a question of putting it together."

Polo, coming off a controversial draw in January against Scott Harrison in the Scot's backyard, has had his fair share of disappointment when fighting for belts. Polo lost to Manuel Medina, Derrick Gainer, and Julio Pablo Chacon in previous attempts at titles, all by split decision. Marquez would become the first titlist to defeat the Colombian decisively.

Polo, the taller featherweight by two inches at 5'9", tried to use his reach advantage in the opening round, as he went backward and attempted to make Marquez come after him, all the while throwing his long right jab. But the Mexican was too smart. Every time Polo, 126, threw his southpaw jab, Marquez, 125, would land a counter left hook. There wasn't much action the first six rounds, as both boxers were playing a waiting game. But Marquez was winning virtually every round.

Marquez, 31, one of the best technical boxers in the world, landed a hard, straight right in the seventh that sent Polo, 34, against the ropes. The challenger's glove touched the canvas, and referee Richard Steele (USA) began a count. Polo wasn't badly hurt, however.

In the last two rounds, Marquez picked up the pace a bit and landed clean right uppercuts to Polo's chin that sent his head snapping backward. Marquez looked like he could finish off Polo, 34-5-3 (24), but the Mexican was content to just win the rounds and not excite the fans. Those fans responded by booing the two fighters as the fight came to a close.

Judge Adalaide Byrd (USA) scored the fight 120-107, Fred Steinwinder III (USA) had it 119-108, and Thomas Schreck (USA) saw it 118-109, all for Marquez, 44-2-1 (33). THE RING scored it the same as Schreck, 118-109.

Marquez may not please everyone, but he does what he needs to do to get the win on his record. When asked if he was going to move up in weight or stay at featherweight, he responded, "I'd like to go to 130 pounds, because I know that's where the big fights are, but I wouldn't mind unifying if there's a title to be unified."

Television: Showtime

Promoters: Top Rank, Gary Shaw Productions, Banner Promotions

(5-7-05)

Wayne McCullough

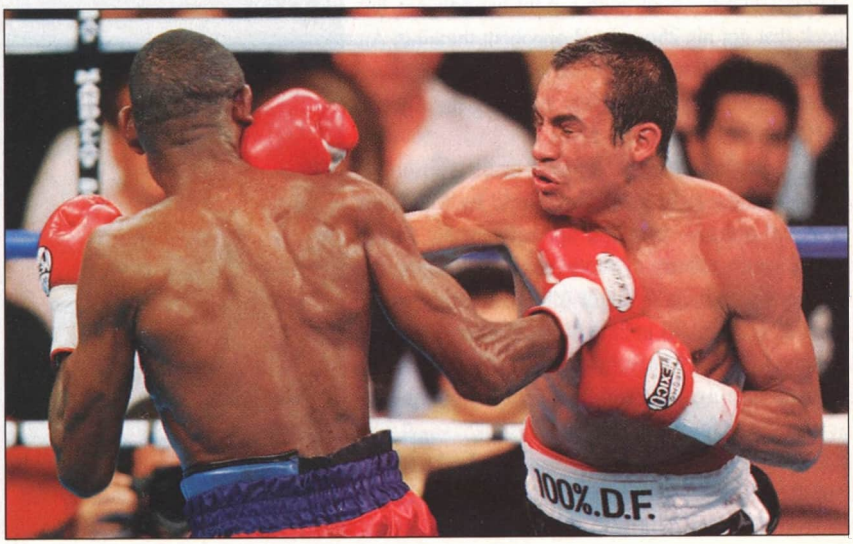


PHOTO BY NICK LAHAM/GETTY IMAGES

Marquez (right) trade right hands Polo during title-retaining decision victory

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

Margarito hooks Cintron into fifth-round TKO defeat

Antonio Margarito KO 5 Kermit Cintron

Las Vegas, Nevada: Going into this welterweight fight at Caesars Palace outdoor arena, the biggest puncher in the division was supposed to be Cintron, who had kayoed 22 of his 24 opponents. But Margarito proved that he could also hit hard—perhaps even harder than Cintron—putting the less experienced fighter down four times en route to a fifth-round TKO win in an exciting, but one-sided, fight.

"With the preparation that we did, we were ready for Cintron and his power," Margarito said afterward. "We knew he was a big right-hand puncher, and that was the one we were concerned about. I knew as long as I kept my hands up there and covered myself, I would have no problems with it. I don't think he even landed a clean one."

Cintron, 146½, Reading, Pennsylvania, tried to make his power felt in the first two rounds. In the opener, he landed a left hook followed by a right, showing why more than 90 percent of his opponents have not heard the final bell.

Margarito, 147, Tijuana, Mexico, took Cintron's big shots and showed his superior skill and experience in the third, hitting Cintron's body with a right hand then a left hook that got his 25-year-old opponent thinking. An uppercut by Margarito opened up a nasty cut over Cintron's right eye, decisively swinging the fight in the 27-year-old Mexican's favor.

Cintron came out in the fourth looking unsure of himself, and a right hand to the head by Margarito dropped him. He climbed up, but it wasn't long before another flurry of shots sent him down again. Cintron, who hadn't fought (due to injuries) since beating Teddy Reid in July 2004, looked lost going into the fifth, and Margarito landed another hard right to drop him again. Cintron displayed guts as he scrambled up for the third time.

Margarito piled on the pressure, and a bunch of punches, featuring a massive right to the body, dropped Cintron, 24-1 (22), for the last time, as his corner signaled to referee Kenny Bayless (USA) that was all over at 2:12 of the round.

"I'm looking forward to fighting the best fighters out there, like Oscar De La Hoya and Zab Judah, maybe unify some titles," Margarito, 32-4 (23) with 1 no-contest, declared. "I think this is the first of many big fights for me. I told everyone I could win this fight and even knock him out."

Television: ESPN PPV
Promoter: Main Events
(4-23-05)
Wayne McCullough

Shane Mosley W 10 David Estrada

Las Vegas, Nevada: Mosley has moved through three different weight divisions and picked up major titles at all three weights. Moving up in weight classes is normal for a lot of fighters. But moving back down a division does not happen that often. Mosley broke from tradition by dropping back to welterweight (well, almost welterweight—he weighed in at 148) for this fight after campaigning at junior middleweight since 2003. He took on the tough Estrada, who made Mosley fight for 10 hard rounds, but Sugar Shane won a convincing unanimous decision and moved toward a chance at another world title.

The 33-year-old Mosley started the fight off using his quick left jab and utilizing the full ring to move around and make Estrada, 26, chase after him. Estrada, 148, Miami, Florida, via Chicago, Illinois, had only one loss out of 19 fights coming into this bout. He tried hard in the first three rounds to get near Mosley, Pomona, California, so that he could go to work in close. But Mosley was too experienced and quick for Estrada.

Every time Estrada came in, Mosley slipped his shots and countered back with double left hooks to the head and body. In the fourth, Mosley landed a crushing left hook to the right side of Estrada's body that doubled him over, but the underdog managed to stay upright and finish the round.

Mosley was by far the best fighter Estrada had fought in his

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

Mosley cracks Estrada with a right hand during victorious return to the welterweight division

career. Estrada came on strong in the seventh through the ninth, showing that he can mix it up competitively with the elite. Estrada, 18-2 (9), who had the legendary trainer Angelo Dundee in his corner, connected with solid right hands to Mosley's head that seemed to knock his rhythm off.

But Mosley, coming off two consecutive losses to Winky Wright, was not going to let this fight slip away. In the final three minutes, he got back to controlling the action and landed the quick combinations that he is known for. Both fighters finished the fight toe-to-toe, trading blows, as the almost capacity crowd at Caesars Palace outdoor arena stood in appreciation of a very good fight.

Referee Robert Byrd (USA) did a good job of keeping the fight clean, and Mosley walked away with the unanimous decision win. Judge Chuck Giampa (USA) scored the bout 97-93, Dick Houck (USA) saw it 98-91, and Dave Moretti (USA) had it 99-91. THE RING scored it 98-92.

When asked about a possible fight with Antonio Margarito, Mosley, 40-4 (35), said, "With me being on this card, it wasn't a prelude for me and Margarito or Cintron to fight. It was just for me to take part and get a fight at welterweight, although that would be a great fight, and Margarito is a great champion.

"I think this is a better weight for me. I'm back, there are some things I want to work on, but I felt good, light and fast, and I was victorious."

Television: ESPN PPV
Promoter: Main Events
(4-23-05)
Wayne McCullough

Joe Calzaghe KO 6 Mario Veit

Braunschweig, Germany: There were plenty of reasons to think that Calzaghe might have some problems with Veit, despite having stopped him in a single round four years ago. But the 33-year-old from Newbridge, Wales, was in destructive form again, taking longer this time but dominating all the same before forcing the referee's intervention at 0:42 of the sixth round at the Volkswagenhalle, near Hanover. It was Calzaghe's 16th defense of the WBO super middleweight title.

The Welshman has recently endured the roughest period of his life. The breakup of his marriage to childhood sweetheart Mandy coincided with the collapse of a scheduled fight against Glen Johnson last summer. Floored in the fourth round last October by Egypt's Kabary Salem, he recovered to win on points, but it was a sloppy, unauthoritative display. Veit had managed to redeem himself by beating Salem by split decision and stopping Charles Brewer, and territorial advantage for his rematch against Calzaghe (when they fought in April 2001 it was in the cauldron-like Cardiff International Arena) allowed for the possibility of a hometown decision going his way. But Calzaghe was determined and focused from the opening bell and ripped in punches that painfully reminded Veit of the fate he suffered four years previously, hastening the inevitability of his demise.

The first couple of rounds were cautious, with Calzaghe, 167½, sizing up his challenge, while Veit, 167, Cottbus, Germany, was simply making sure he survived. He did not have the fear in his facial expression that he betrayed that night in Cardiff, but his look did not radiate confidence. When Calzaghe pierced his guard with a left uppercut in the third and continued to fire in combinations, it was clear that Veit's single shots were having a negligible effect.

Calzaghe was beginning to find his range in the fourth and hurt Veit, 31, in the fifth before the German retaliated with a solid right. But just before the bell, Calzaghe crossed viciously with his left, striking the German's jaw, and Veit crashed to the canvas. American referee Gino Rodriguez issued the mandatory eight-count and the bell intervened, but Veit looked on his way out.

Confirmation came in the sixth, Calzaghe attacking his opponent with a two-fisted assault that put him on the floor again. Veit shook his head in resignation as Rodriguez counted to eight, and the German's trainer, Fritz Sdunek, climbed on the ring apron, towel in hand. Rodriguez rebuked him and motioned Calzaghe and Veit back together, but stepped in seconds later with Veit, 45-2 (23), totally overwhelmed.

"We're looking to get Joe in the ring with Jeff Lacy next and I believe that fight will be done in the autumn," said Calzaghe's promoter, Frank Warren, a view supported by Gary Shaw, who promotes Lacy, and Showtime. Lacy will defend his super middleweight belt in August against former Calzaghe victim Robin Reid.

"I'm still hungry," said Calzaghe, 39-0 (31). "I still have the desire for that big fight, and hopefully it will happen before the end of the year."

Promoter: Universum Boxing
(5-7-05)
Brian Doogan

PHOTO BY JOHN GICHIGI/GETTY IMAGES

Calzaghe clocks Veit with a right prior to stopping him in the sixth round

Luis Perez KO 6 Luis Bolano

New York, New York: Perez, fighting for the first time in 16 months, was a little surprised by how easy his second defense of his IBF junior bantamweight belt was. The 27-year-old Perez, 115, Managua, Nicaragua, knocked down Bolano, 113¼, Cordoba, Colombia, with a jab in the second round. That's really all that the fans at Madison Square Garden needed to see to realize that Perez, 23-1 (15), was going to stop his 35-year-old challenger (who had been easily stopped by Mark Johnson in four rounds in his previous fight). Bolano, 38-3 (28), could do little against his fellow southpaw except swallow jab after jab after jab, falling in one-

PHOTO BY ED MULHOLLAND

Perez plants a perfect uppercut on Bolano's mouth

sided fashion on the James Toney-John Ruiz undercard.

Perez' right jab defined the fight. After easily winning the first round by stalking and landing a few shots to Bolano's ribcage, Perez caught Bolano flush on the chin with a right jab in the second, sending an off-balance Bolano to the canvas for an eight-count from referee Pete Santiago (USA). The third round followed the same design as the initial two, with Bolano hardly fighting back at all.

The fourth and fifth rounds saw more of the same, and Perez began pushing the action, growing frustrated by Bolano's reluctance to mix. Toward the end of the fifth, Perez stuck out another jab and down went Bolano for a second time. By now, a small cut had been opened just below Bolano's right eye.

It wasn't the jab that ended the mismatch, however; it was a Perez right hook to the body. Bolano crumpled to the canvas and Santiago immediately stepped in and called a halt to the bout at the 2:46 mark of the sixth.

"That's something I have never really seen before," said Perez about scoring two knockdowns with his jab. "I know I have a strong jab, but I never knocked anyone down with it before. I never saw Bolano before this fight. Tonight was the first time. I never even saw him on tape or anything. I never thought it would be this easy."

Promoter: Don King Productions

(4-30-05)

Joe Santoliquito

Vicente Mosquera W 12 Yodsanan Nanthachai

New York, New York: Unlike Panamanian legend Roberto Duran, Mosquera, from Panama City, is intent upon learning English to help further his career. However, until then, Mosquera seems to be doing just fine talking with his fists.

His two gloved interpreters spoke plenty on the James Toney-John Ruiz undercard at Madison Square Garden, carrying him to an upset victory in the most action-filled fight on the show. The 25-year-old Mosquera, 129, captured the WBA super featherweight belt from Yodsanan, 129½, Srisaket, Thailand, via unanimous decision.

Mosquera wasted little time in attacking the 34-year-old Yodsanan, dropping him in the first round with a short right hand. The Panamanian controlled the fast-paced second round as well, and the third round turned out to be a Round of the Year candidate. Early in the round, Yodsanan stunned Mosquera with a big right hand, sending him to the canvas. The Panamanian collected himself and fought back, but Yodsanan soon hurt Mosquera again with another heavy right. From there, the two engaged in a wild give-and-take that ended with Mosquera landing a right of his own that dropped Yodsanan, leading judges Frank Adams (USA) and Glenn Feldman (USA) to call the round even, while Oscar Perez (Dominican Republic) leaned toward Mosquera and his late-round lightning.

In the fourth, Mosquera opened up again on the titleholder, missing wildly sometimes, but connecting with effectiveness inside. The fight slowed between the fifth and seventh rounds, and in the eighth and ninth, Mosquera started moving laterally to stay away from Yodsanan's sweeping hooks to the body. By the 10th, Yodsanan appeared as if he was in position to steer the momentum of the fight in his direction, as Mosquera wasn't punching with any consistency. But the challenger assured himself of the win when he found a little something extra in his gas tank in round 11, putting together one more assault and dropping Yodsanan, 44-3-1 (36), for the third time.

Judge Perez had it surprisingly wide at 118-108 Mosquera, while Adams scored it 116-112 and Feldman saw it 115-112, all for the new titleholder. THE RING scored it 116-112 in favor of Mosquera.

"This was my first time in the United States and I'd like to come back again," Mosquera, 29-1-1 (10), said through an interpreter. "I was humbled a little, but I got knocked down and got right back up. I'm always in a war."

The referee was Arthur Mercante Jr. (USA).

Promoter: Don King Productions

(4-30-05)

Joe Santoliquito

Roberto Vasquez KO 10 Beibis Mendoza

Panama City, Panama: For all of eight days, it looked like it might be the Fight of the Year. Then Diego Corrales-Jose Luis Castillo came along. Still, Vasquez' upset of veteran Mendoza to win the vacant WBA light flyweight title was a fantastic, back-and-forth affair, with the hometown kid thrilling the fans on hand at the Figali Convention Center by knocking Mendoza down twice and halting him in the 10th round.

Many of the early rounds began with Vasquez, 108, Panama City, looking to box, and giving way to his brawling tendencies by the middle of the round. Mendoza, 108, Rio Cedro, Colombia, landed several thudding right hands, marking Vasquez up under the eyes by the end of the third round. The 21-year-old Vasquez

landed a brilliant right cross to open the fifth, but he got too excited trying to follow up, and Mendoza took advantage of the openings presented to him, pummeling "La Arana" ("The Spider") for the remainder of the round.

With his eyes rapidly swelling shut, Vasquez looked almost done for by the start of the sixth, but he hung tough and began working the 30-year-old Colombian's body, rallying back to hurt Mendoza visibly in a stirring seventh round. But the momentum quickly shifted again in the eighth, a round that opened with a six-punch flurry from Vasquez and ended with Mendoza in command, walking Vasquez down. Still, Vasquez, his lip badly cut and his eyes closing, kept answering back. He jabbed well in the ninth, setting his more experienced foe up for a heavy right cross that ended the round.

Early in the 10th, Vasquez landed a perfect right to the body, and Mendoza sunk to the canvas. Mendoza, 30-4 (24), was up at the count of eight, and quickly staged a rally, only to be dropped again by a sudden left hook. He beat the count, but referee Luis Pabon wisely called off the fight at 2:03 of the round, making Vasquez, 19-1 (16), boxing's second youngest beltholder, behind only lightweight titlist Juan Diaz.

Television: Telemundo

(4-29-05)

Mahyar Monshipour KO 6 Shigeru Nakazato

Marseilles, France: In a fight that was originally scheduled to take place near the Great Wall of China, Nakazato, 121, Ginowan, Japan, had the look of a man who had run into some kind of wall before Monshipour, 121, was done with him at the Palais des Sports. A diminutive dynamo, Monshipour took the best that the Japanese had to offer before finishing him in six rounds. It was his fourth defense of the WBA super bantamweight title that he won from Salim Medjkoune in July 2003.

Monshipour's is a powerful story of triumph. The son of a former assistant chief of police in Tehran, Iran, he arrived in Poitiers to be raised by an aunt and only took up boxing when he was 17. Twice he has been named French boxer of the year by sports paper *L'Equippe*, and his commitment to helping the victims of the Bam earthquake, in the southeast of Iran, has earned him international praise. Work on a school that he says will be earthquake-proof has already begun.

But his benevolence does not extend to the boxing ring, where he is unbeaten since 1998. He says that he will "always try to win by knockout because you have to be spectacular to be different, to become well-known," and in none of his five title fights has he had to go the distance. There was never the remotest possibility that he would be made to by Nakazato after they engaged in a frenetic opening round in which Monshipour's greater accuracy gave him swift advantage.

But Nakazato, 32, had a good pedigree. Twice he went the distance with 122-pound titleholder Oscar Larios of Mexico, first in April 2003 in Tokyo, then in March 2004 in Saitama when one of the judges, Dalby Shirley, gave the Mexican every round. By the fourth round, in front of his adoring French fans, Monshipour, 30, had begun to make his superiority count in a telling manner, backing Nakazato to the ropes with a flurry of furious blows. But the challenger was brave and retaliated in the fifth with several big lefts and rights that landed on Monshipour's face and jaw.

"I thought I'd really go for it in the fifth round and just try to make the best of the chances I had," said Nakazato, 24-8-1 (18). But Monshipour, who was cut around his right eye, took the punches well.

Then in the sixth, he opened up with devastating effect. There were less than 30 seconds remaining when his overpowering attack culminated in a right cross to the jaw and Nakazato fell. Correctly, referee Raul Caiz (USA) waved the fight over at the 2:47 mark.

"Winning was a matter of course for me because Nakazato was too one-dimensional," said Monshipour, 27-2-2 (18).

Promoter: Michel Acaries

(4-29-05)

Brian Doogan

Chris John W 12 Derrick Gainer

Jakarta, Indonesia: After his second straight completely negative, unambitious, unwilling performance, it's officially time to start calling him Derrick *Loser*. The former featherweight beltholder and Roy Jones protege from Pensacola, Florida, went into his shell against John at Britama Arena just as he did in his previous fight (17 months earlier) against Juan Manuel Marquez. But that shouldn't detract too much from a fine performance from John, 35-0-1 (19), who is establishing himself as a legit top-10 featherweight contender (even if the non-"super" WBA belt he holds is quite the opposite of legit).

Gainer, 125¾, enjoyed his only good moment in the first round, when he scored a flash knockdown. John, 126, Semarang, Indonesia, popped right up and pressed the action, and swept each of the remaining 11 rounds. The 25-year-old John constantly outworked Gainer, 32, who appeared to be all used up—especially at feather, where he's struggling mightily to make weight. None of the judges gave Gainer, 39-7-1 (24), a round after the first, as Derek Milham scored it 118-110, Silvestre Abainza saw it 118-111, and Mikael Hook had it 118-109. The referee was England's John Coyle.

(4-22-05) ■

PHOTO BY BORIS HORVAT/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Monshipour (left) overcame a cut eye to stop Nakazato into a sixth-round

CLASSIC

From THE RING, October 1935

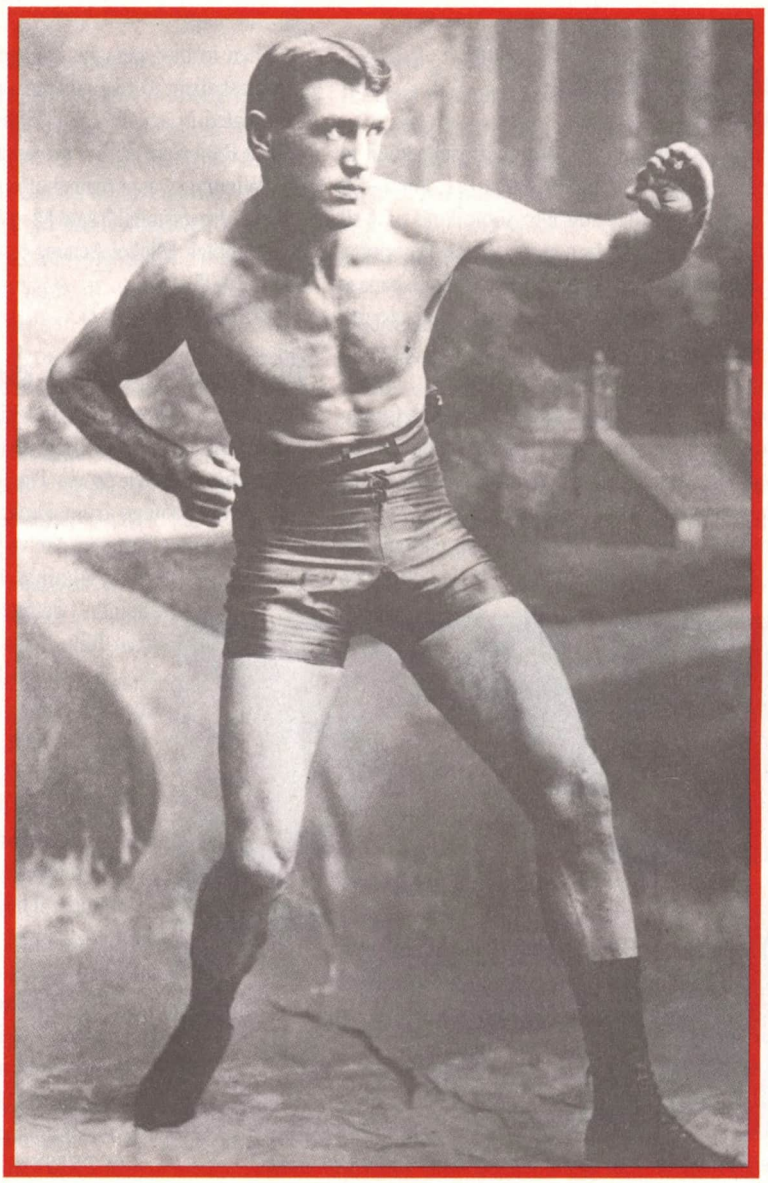
PHILADELPHIA JACK O'BRIEN

Victor Of The British Middleweight And Heavyweight Champion

By George T. Pardy

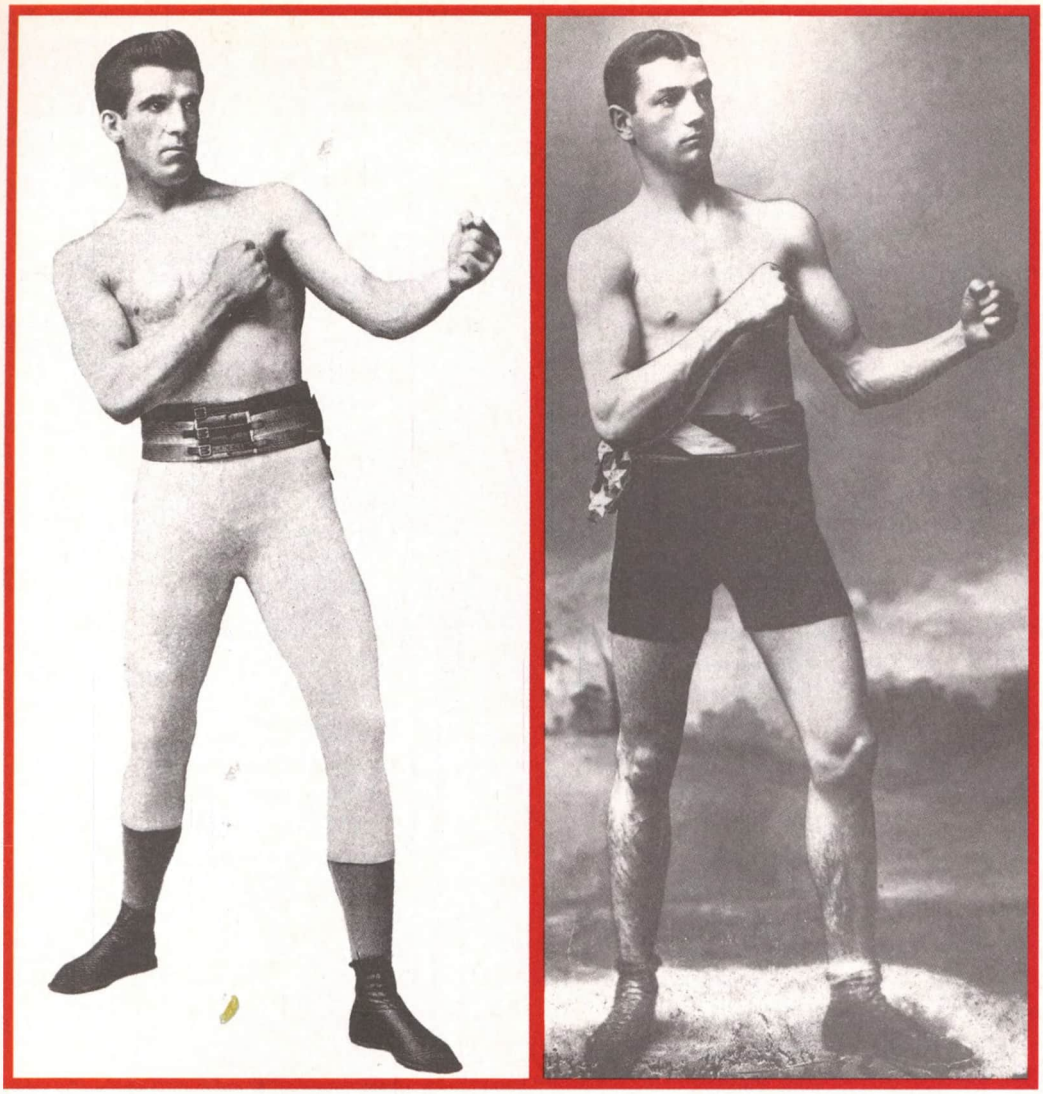
(Editor's Note: This is a condensed version.)

On a corner of Broadway and 51st Street, New York City, an electric sign announces the tenancy of "Philadelphia Jack O'Brien," physical culture specialist, which daily and nightly draws generous patronage from Gotham's business and society elite of both sexes, interested in development of hitherto unused muscles and the shedding of surplus avoirdupois. To the initiated in ring lore, however, that particular sign speaks of performances between the ropes by an ex-champion who, in his prime, was equaled by few and exceeded by none of the fistic brotherhood as a spectacular, colorful, and daringly sensational glove artist.



Born Joseph F. Hagan in the City of Brotherly Love, "Philadelphia Jack" is now in his early-50s, a finely athletic figure 5'10½" tall, as erect and splendidly muscular as one of Fenin1orc Cooper's legendary Indian chiefs, as lithe as a leopard, and able to travel half a dozen rounds with the mitts at a pace guaranteed to bewilder nine out of 10 of our present-day battlers. Now Hagan is as staunchly an Irish cognomen as any true-blood Celt could wish for, and it may seem strange that a Hagan should switch to O'Brien, or even vice versa. One would as well expect to hear of a Maloney changing his name to Flanagan.

But thereby hangs a tale! As a youth, the Hagan lad drove a truck for a living, but, coming of a fighting breed, his



O'Brien copied the styles of former champs Jim Corbett (left) and Kid McCoy (right). O'Brien's elusiveness and fancy footwork were reminiscent of Corbett's. His tendancy to seek openings in an opponent's defense by teasing and luring was derived from McCoy, one of the most notorious tricksters of all-time.

attention was naturally turned to the mimic war of the modern arena. Not, indeed, as an active performer at first. But it chanced that on one fateful occasion he agreed to handle a certain Jack O'Brien, who was scheduled to do battle. When O'Brien was due to step into the ring, he was conspicuous by his absence. But young Joe Hagan was on deck and offered to substitute for the missing warrior.

He was elected, and "thrown to the lions," as the sports of Rome in Emperor Nero's time might have put it. That is, the assembled sports fancied him as a victim fed to an experienced adversary. But in after years, the then-metamorphosed Joe Hagan frequently fooled the fistic sharps, running true to the form he exhibited on the night of his scrapping debut. For instead of being chewed up, he did the excess chewing himself and was gloriously returned victor.

From the outset of his career, Philadelphia Jack O'Brien studied the finer points of the game. He ultimately became one of the craftiest ring generals and masters of science that ever donned a glove. Two of the pugilistic leaders he most admired and whose methods he largely adopted were Jim Corbett and Kid McCoy.

His footwork and the elusive fashion in which he used his head when slipping punches were reminiscent of the former's polished tactics, while his ability to tease, bewilder, and lure an opponent into leaving an opening for a knockout shot bore a startling resemblance to the subtly effective strategy of the deceptive Kid. For, unlike Tommy Loughran, his townie, who later was to blossom forth as a scientific wonder, O'Brien was not disposed to sacrifice punching power to cleverness.

There were many occasions upon which Philadelphia Jack contented himself, for reasons of his own, with merely outpointing an adversary and allowing him to last the limit when he could have stopped his man had he so desired. These performances at times caused certain newspaper critics to credit him merely as a wily left-hand artiste and deplore his lack of a sleep-producing wallop. But those who knew him best were well-aware that in his prime O'Brien could drop an antagonist for the full count with a deadly precision that left no room for argument as to the winner.

He started as a lightweight in the late-'90s when the six-round, no-decision bouts prevailed in his native city, Philadelphia. By 1901, he had grown to middleweight status when he set sail for England with the intention of testing the mettle of the British boxers. This trip abroad was characteristic of his enterprising disposition, for England was not then a familiar hunting ground for American fighters, as it is at the present day. The fact of the matter was that O'Brien was far in advance of his day when it came to realizing the advantages of publicity.

He had done everything that could be asked of him as a crack welter and middleweight at home, nor was there lack of matches. But he never was the sort of person to be contented with following the beaten track, there was no title shot to be had just then within the limits of Uncle Sam's domain, and consequently no way of getting under the spotlight, so long as he merely remained "Philadelphia Jack," minus the glamour which goes with the possession of a pugilistic crown.

He crashed through the ranks of

THE RING RATINGS, October 1935

James Braddock

HEAVYWEIGHTS
World Champ: Jimmy Braddock
1. Max Baer
2. Joe Louis
3. Max Schmeling
4. Steve Hamas
5. Ford Smith
6. Walter Neusel
7. Tommy Loughran
8. Hank Hankinson
9. Art Lasky
10. King Levinsky

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
World Champ: Bob Olin
1. Maxey Rosenbloom
2. Al McCoy
3. John Henry Lewis
4. Tony Shucco
5. Ambrose Palmer
6. Joe Knight
7. Adolf Heuser
8. Jock McAvoy
9. Ray Actis
10. Frank Rowsey

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
World Champ: Marcel Thil
1. Lou Brouillard
2. Freddy Steele
3. Paul Pirrone
4. Young Corbett
5. Babe Risko
6. Teddy Yarosz
7. Jack Gibbons
8. Frank Battaglia
9. Oscar Rankins
10. Fred Henneberry

WELTERWEIGHTS
World Champ: Barney Ross
1. Jimmy McLarnin
2. Bep Van Klaveren
3. Kid Azteca
4. Jack Carroll
5. Eddie Kid Wolfe
6. Harry Dublinsky
7. Ceferino Garcia
8. George Salvatore
9. Al Manfredo
10. Izzy Jannazzo

LIGHTWEIGHTS
World Champ: Tony Canzoneri
1. Lou Ambers
2. Cleto Locatelli
3. Frankie Klick
4. Wesley Ramey
5. Tiger Humery
6. Charley Burns
7. Jack "Kid" Berg
8. Al Roth
9. Joe Ghnouly
10. Eddie Cool

FEATHERWEIGHTS
World Champ: Freddy Miller
1. Maurice Holtzer
2. Henry Armstrong
3. Young Casanova
4. Vernon Cormier
5. Fillo Echeverria
6. Mexican Joe Rivers
7. Baby Arizmendi
8. Mike Belloise
9. Petey Sarron
10. Frankie Covelli

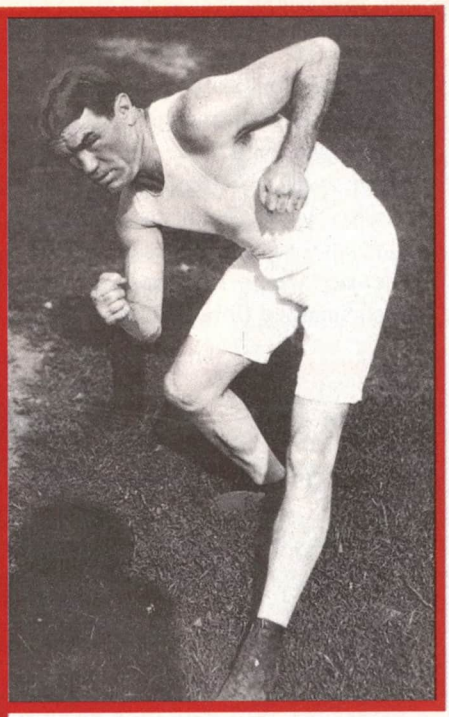
BANTAMWEIGHTS
World Champ: Balcasar Sanchelli
1. Sixto Escobar
2. Louis Salica
3. Midget Wolgast
4. Young Tommy
5. Pablo Dano
6. Bobby Leyvas
7. Indian Quintana
8. Speedy Dado
9. Little Pancho
10. Star Frisco

FLYWEIGHTS
World Champ: Vacant
1. Benny Lynch
2. Jackie Brown
3. Small Montana
4. Joe Mendiola
5. Maurice Huguenin
6. Valentin Anglemann
7. Tommy Pardoe
8. Bobby Magee
9. Joe Hardy
10. Maurice Filhol

British middle and heavyweights as destructively as a Texas tornado. Within 12 months after his arrival he had run up a list of 16 decisive victories, mostly via the knockout route. Among his victims were Jack Scales, English heavyweight champion, and Dido Plumh, holder of the British middleweight title. Neither was in a position to offer an alibi. O'Brien attended to that, for Scales went out cold in less than a round, while Plumb took a dying gladiator's nap in six frames.

It is striking testimony to O'Brien's diplomatic skill that his success in trimming their best and bravest aroused no animosity in the breasts of the English sports. On the contrary, they took him to their hearts, metaphorically speaking, and feted, dined, and toasted him to an extent that might have proved the undoing of an athlete lacking in self-control. But O'Brien, whose sagacious Irish brains always worked as coldly and calmly as though packed in ice, was not the sort to be led astray by profuse adulation.

As wise in mob psychology as in that of the ring, he could analyze human nature with the unerring perception of a graduate of the College of Hard Knocks whose knowledge of the masses, acquired first-hand, was later ground to razor-like sharpness by educational processes. Socially and otherwise, he was thus enabled to meet his English hosts on their own level. Like Corbett, there was a good



O'Brien works out (left) and displays his famous crouch (above). O'Brien was often criticized for not putting lesser opponents away easily. But "Philadelphia Jack" felt the need to include showmanship in his fights.

deal of the born actor in him; he could flatter with a convincing air of candor, and his popularity increased in proportion to the deft tributes he knew so well how to pay to national pride.

On his return home he was given a tremendous ovation by his Philadelphia townsmen, which was participated in not only by the sport element, but by sober-minded representative citizens to whom the average pugilist meant less than nothing. Philadelphia Jack must surely have felt on this eventful occasion that his youthful ambitions had been more than realized.

Meanwhile, with matches scarce in the middleweight division, he kept on fighting big fellows successfully, including a 13-round knockout of Bob Fitzsimmons in 1905.

There is no question that Fitzsimmons had aged and slowed down perceptibly when O'Brien whipped him. But he was always dangerous, as Jack well knew, and the latter took no chances with him. In the previous year they had boxed six rounds in the National League Park in Philadelphia. For four rounds O'Brien easily outpointed Fitz. Then, somewhat to the consternation of his friends present, Jack appeared to go weak, and he finished the last two sessions in rather poor shape.

But it was all part of O'Brien's plans for the future. When discussing the affair with the late Tad Dorgan, he said: "I took on the six-rounder with Fitz just to try him out. In the first four rounds I did my best to beat him, but without trying for a knockout. He couldn't go fast enough to hurt me. Then in the last two I let up, so as to let him imagine he was defeating me. I'll get him some time in a 20-round go, and I believe I can stop him."

O'Brien's frank admission of the tactics in the Fitzsimmons bout was that of a businessman who has no compunctions about tricking a competitor. In fact, this was the view he took of boxing as a whole, once he was fairly launched as a professional. He never tried to conceal a practice he utilized of "carrying" an inferior performer for a stipulated number of rounds, nor did he consider it faking, in the true sense of the word.

His contention was that the main object of a fight was to entertain. Furthermore, he came right out in a signed newspaper article and said so, adding that all boxers of class were sometimes compelled to "let up" on opponents in order to create spectacular effect and keep the onlookers guessing.

O'Brien's defense of his methods occurred after a disastrous experience in Los Angeles, when Tommy Burns was awarded a 20-round decision over him. The battle took place at Los Angeles, May 8, 1907. As Burns, after Jim Jeffries' retirement, had won recognition as world's heavyweight champion, by virtue of defeating Marvin Hart, the title was at stake when he and O'Brien collided for the third time, they having previously engaged in two bouts, both of which ended in no-decisions.

In the second affair the referee created something of a sensation by announcing, just before the bell rang, that all bets were declared off. This action, which was never quite explained to anyone's satisfaction, naturally caused a lot of talk later, and when Burns got the verdict, the rumors of cross and double-cross waxed

Bob Fitzsimmons was tricked into thinking O'Brien was fading when they fought in a six-round exhibition in their first meeting. But it turned out that Philadelphia Jack had fooled the veteran when he won the light heavyweight title, beating Fitzsimmons on December 20, 1905.

louder than ever. For O'Brien's part, he had little to say, except that the cards had been stacked against him, and he couldn't possibly have won.

The big prize for which Philadelphia Jack had so long angled, the heavyweight crown, was never again to come within grabbing distance, and probably few boxers could have lived down the scandal of the Burns affair as he did, with the Coast papers, and some of the Eastern journals, making him a target for adverse criticism and sour innuendo. But in the two following years he proved to be as great a box office magnet as ever, and 1909 saw him a participant in a New York battle that passed into pugilistic history as a nerve-shocking thriller par excellence!

That was the Stanley Ketchel-Jack O'Brien contest. Ketchel was at his splendid best then, a two-handed knocker-out who loved the game and fought with the savagery of an untamed timber wolf. He was the champion middleweight sensation of his day, perhaps the greatest of his class, considered purely as a ferocious slugger.

No one who was present will ever forget Ketchel's magnificently furious attack, and O'Brien's no less magnificent defense.

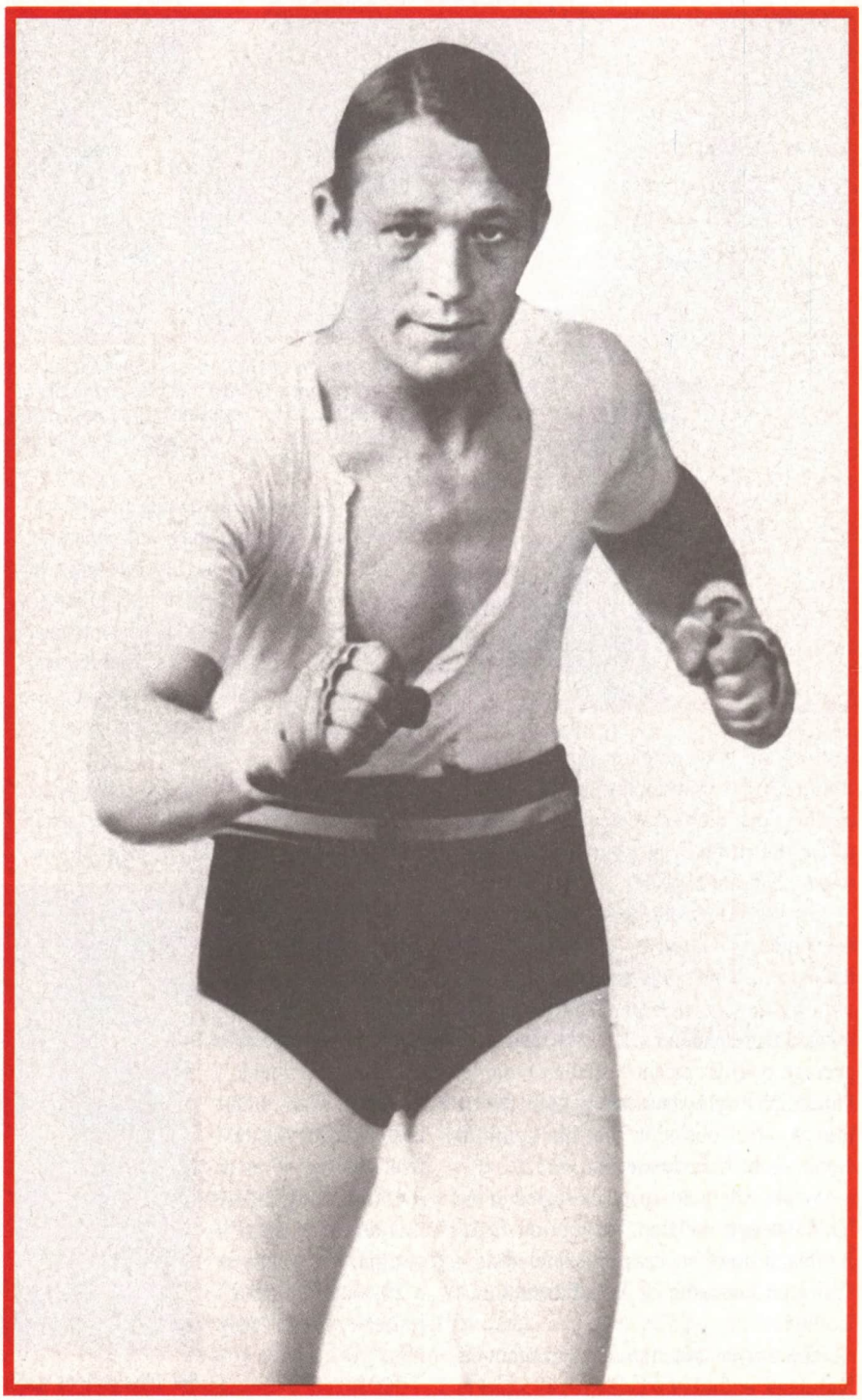
The gloves used were small, they had been "broken" (the padding shoved back as to leave knuckles covered only by he leather), and the wearer could rip and put up an opponent with them after a fashion only understood by those "in the know." O'Brien's straight left, thus accoutered, played havoc with the Ketchel features as Stanley rushed, pouring in his famous bodypunches, working his terrific left, but failing to break through his adversary's impregnable guard.

And still Ketchel kept coming! He was battered, bleeding freely from mouth, nose, and cut eyebrows, O'Brien's gloves playing veritable devil's tattoo on his crimsoned body and face. Round after round the grim slaughter went on, the boxing wizard countering, slipping away from the whizzing contact of wickedly driven punches, and always stabbing, stabbing the wet-red mark before him with that cruel left.

Hugh McIntosh, the Australian promoter, sitting beside me in the press stand roared hoarsely, "Gawd blimme, we'd stop this in Australia!" as Ketchel, blindly staggering but madly determined, plunged forward and onward in his unremitting assaults.

And so into the 10th and final round when Ketchel, goaded by the subtle taunt of his chief second, James J. Johnston, made one supreme rally, one last terrific effort, smashed through O'Brien's defense and crashed home a right to the jaw that sent Philadelphia Jack head-downward in his corner. There was just nine seconds of the round remaining, the count over the fallen boxer started—clang went the bell, and his seconds dragged O'Brien to his chair.

He recovered swiftly to learn that luck had gone against him when triumph seemed sure. But that Ketchel victory did not go



O'Brien fought valiantly but succumbed to all-time middleweight great Stanley Ketchel when they fought in 1909. Their back-and-forth, 10-round tilt set the standard for action fights in the early-1900s.

into the official records as a knockout. For, you see, boxing was conducted in New York then under the no-decision rule. The round had ended before O'Brien could be counted out, he had therefore lasted the full distance, even if he had slumped at the journey's end.

It would be incorrect to list the Ketchel battle as O'Brien's most important ring engagement, yet it is perhaps the most widely known and talked about of any of his encounters, and written about too, for that matter. Boxing scribes have used it as a means of comparison whenever adjectives failed them in describing some unusually strenuous glove contests. Certainly, for sheer raw melodrama and an astounding climax, that amazing 10-round slaughterfest is entitled to rank as a modern arena classic.

Last March, at the Park Central hotel, Jack O'Brien threw a beefsteak party to celebrate the 25th anniversary of his battle with Ketchel. On that occasion, he and Jack Archer, his gym assistant, staged a realistic reproduction of the famous fray, with all of the original cast that could be assembled. Tim Hurst, the referee on that fateful night, is dead. So is Ketchel, victim of an assassin's bullet.

Following the Ketchel combat, O'Brien boxed a six-round, no-decision bout with Jack Johnson in Philadelphia, and participated in about a dozen contests before he hung up the gloves for good as a professional in 1912. Having attained his 35th year, he was satisfied that his day as topnotcher was over, and being well-fixed in this world's goods, there was no occasion for him to linger in a minor role on a stage where he was formerly a star.

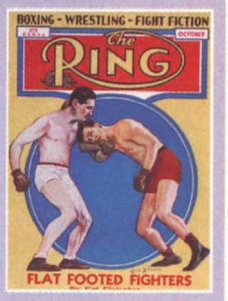
In 1918, he married Miss A. Florence Yerger, then a successful practicing member of the Philadelphia bar. The luck that never quite deserted Philadelphia Jack was with him in this exceedingly fortunate marital venture, as all who have met his gracious and fascinating helpmate will agree. As a New York resident of many years standing, he had his ups and downs. The stock market crash put a serious dent in his bankroll, but he took fortune's buffets as gamely as he was wont stand up under punishment in the ring and never complained.

About five years ago, an incident occurred that featured him on the front page again, and showed that the O'Brien's propensity for taking chances was as much alive as ever. Leaving his gymnasium and strolling forth on Broadway, Jack glanced idly into the open doorway of a neighboring millinery store. Lined up against the wall within were several customers and the two proprietors, held motionless and terror stricken under the covering gun of a lone bandit conducting a stickup after the most approved fashion of the day.

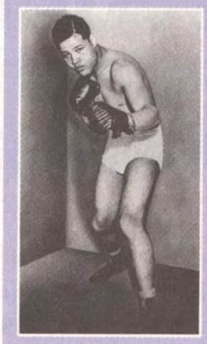
The average person would probably have run for a policeman. Not so the combative Mr. O'Brien. In two swift strides he was inside the door, in one pantherlike leap he was upon the highwayman's back, his iron grip on the latter's pistol-hand. A savage wrench on the thug's wrist sent the weapon clattering to the floor, a thudding fist against his jaw rendered him quite oblivious to his surroundings, and Philadelphia Jack, dragging the victim into the open-air, presented the limp carcass to the corner traffic cop.

The affair made quite a sensation at the time, but O'Brien thought little and spoke less about it. From his point of view, it was a trivial happening. And after all, to a gladiator who has won a place in fistic history as a superman of the ring, a minor triumph over a wretched thug must appear of scant consequence. ■

THE RING, October 1935

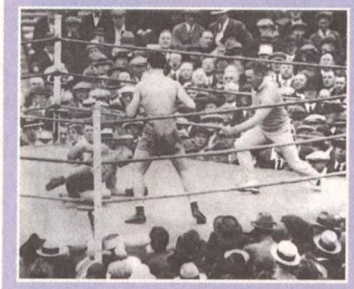


***The Cover*:** The rise of Joe Louis through the heavyweight ranks stirred an old argument THE RING felt compelled to broach: Could flat-footed fighters be successful? Jim Corbett, whose up-on-toes style helped him become heavyweight champ, maintained that no good fighter ever fought flat-footed. But it was a flat-footed fighter, Bob Fitzsimmons, the story points out, that ended Corbett's reign.



***Can Joe Louis Be Heavyweight Champ?*:** The question was posed by experts in the mid-1930s, as "The Brown Bomber" rose in prominence. RING Editor Nat Fleischer certainly believed in Louis. "Joe, in my opinion, is the greatest combination fighter I've seen since Jack Johnson's day," Fleischer wrote. It was high praise, considering Fleischer often said Johnson was the all-time best heavyweight.

***Shutting Out Schmeling*:** If it were up to Fleischer, Max Schmeling wouldn't be packing his bags to go anywhere. Fleischer spoke out about Schmeling fighting in the United States. As World War II neared, Germany made it difficult for Americans to take money they made in Germany out of the country. Fleischer questioned why any German should be allowed be make money in America and take it back to Germany.



***Leave It Alone, Mickey*:** For those who remembered Mickey Walker, it was painful to watch the once-great former middleweight champion attempt a comeback. The fat, frayed Walker showed few flashes of his former self when he kayoed fighters like Lefty Cooper. Walker lost to nondescript Swede John Anderson, prompting Fleischer to urge Walker to retire for good.

***Fights Of The Month*:** Lightweight champion Tony Canzoneri came off the canvas to beat Bobby Pacho in Chicago. It was just one of many fights THE RING featured in a brief pictorial highlighting the top fights of the months. Lou Brouillard's victory over Young Corbett III was another bout that received attention.

THE FIGHT DOCTOR

A FALSE SENSE OF SECURITY ... OR THE TRUTH ABOUT HEADGEAR

By Margaret Goodman, MD

The recent death of 34-year-old amateur fighter Becky Zerlentes, following a knockout at a Golden Gloves event in Colorado, once again brought up the issue of headgear, and whether it protects fighters against head blows. Amateur boxers are required to wear headgear in competition, and both pro and amateur fighters wear headgear in the gym in an attempt to deflect head blows.

Although it is pointless to compare football helmets to boxing headgear, football provides an interesting model in that sport's attempt to cut down on deaths. In 1968, when catastrophic football deaths increased to 68, the National Operating Committee on Standards in Athletic Equipment (NOCSAE) was formed to set research priorities on injury reduction. As a result, changes in helmet design, along with rule changes and coaching, led to an 84 percent drop in head and neck injuries between 1959 and 1990. Helmets were changed to be more comfortable to the athlete with increased ventilation and conforming more to the head. The use of lighter-weight components also made it easier for players to keep their head up, which helps reduce spine injuries.

How much does headgear really protect a fighter's brain?

Joe Guzman, Director of Professional Boxing for Everlast Worldwide, stated that there have been great strides in making headgear more protective to the boxer by using lighter but stronger foams.

"Twenty years ago headgear weighed 18 to 22 ounces," said Guzman. "Today, they weigh only 10 ounces, but offer the same protection through the use of lighter foams. The ear area protrudes less, and there is extra protection across the forehead to act as a buffer."

Everlast's equipment, including its headgear, has received the stamp of approval by USA Boxing, which governs amateur boxing in the U.S. Nonetheless, Guzman agrees there are no studies to show these changes actually lessen the risk of concussion, so we need to look at the reality of the situation.

According to James Pena, former amateur coach and current trainer of professional female fighter Melinda Cooper, "At many amateur tournaments competitors don't have their own headgear, and must instead borrow one. Often these are old, hard, and have lost padding. But a bigger issue is that when wearing headgear these kids think they are protected. They stand there and repeatedly take all kinds of punishment."

Everyone freely admits that headgear, when properly fitted, can protect against cuts. Even so, the debate remains as to what, if anything, it does lessen the effects of head blows.

In 2000, a study by Dr. Barry Jordan and colleagues appeared in *The Physician And Sportsmedicine* regarding acute traumatic brain injury

New book attempts to shed light on ring fatalities, such as Jimmy Doyle's death after his 1947 bout with Ray Robinson in which Doyle suffered a brain injury.

(ATBI) in amateur boxing. The primary objective was to determine if ATBI occurred in competing boxers, and secondly, to determine if headgear reduced the risk. Thirty-eight Dutch male amateur boxers underwent neuropsychological tests (memory, attention, planning, mental, and fine-motor speed) against 28 male controls. There was a significant difference between the two groups. The conclusion was that "participation in amateur boxing matches may diminish neurocognitive functioning *despite the use of headgear*."

The NOCSAE believes that part of its success in reducing head injuries relates to education on what the helmet can and cannot do. This includes accompanying instructions on use, fit, and limitations. This, along with rule changes by the NFL and the NCAA, helped stop players using their head as battering rams. Likewise, concussions can be prevented by educating the boxer as to what the headgear is designed to do. Furthermore, one has to only attend an amateur tournament to witness kids using their headgear to butt or push away their opponent. This can only lead to concussions, and the technique continues to result in cuts from headbutts in professional fights.

The maintenance and fitting of headgear is crucial to its use. It needs to not sit so low on the head, as the fighter has to keep his chin up to see (thereby increasing the risk of being knocked out), the chin strap needs to fit properly, the gear needs to form fit to the head, and a mouthpiece must be used at all times. Lastly, like all equipment, headgear needs to be checked and periodically replaced. According to Dr. Jordan, who is also chief medical officer for the New York State Athletic Commission, "Headgear doesn't protect the rotational acceleration that you see in boxing. This is the key to a TKO or kayo. Headgear will not protect the brain against impact of dangerous punches to the chin." The brain will still slosh around inside the skull and be susceptible to concussion and bleeding.

Bottom line: Manufactures should spend as much time, if not more, on improving headgear as they do other boxing equipment. Which manufacturer's gloves top boxers wear in bouts has become something of a competition among companies who make them. Headgear, however, is the one thing that can directly save the lives of our boxers. As a ringside physician and regulator who sees the results of too many punches to the head, I challenge every boxing equipment manufacturer to step up to and start studying how to make headgear more effective.

****

Everyone in boxing perpetually yearns for documentation regarding the actual risks and dangers in the sport. Millions of dollars of research money is used to study the medical side of many athletic endeavors, but not so with boxing. So when I first glanced through the 750-page text entitled, *Boxing: Medical Aspects,* by Friedrich Unterharnscheidt and Julia Taylor Unterharnscheidt (Academic Press, 2003), it was if I had received a great gift.

The book repeatedly enters uncharted territory. The table of contents includes everything from the mechanics of head injury to hand injuries to theologians' views of pugilism. Friedrich Unterharnscheidt is a medical scientist, a neurologist, and neuropathologist. He states, "It is not my intention to support or oppose boxing as a sport; my own research and experience with head trauma and boxing injuries compels me as a physician and a scientist to let the findings be known so that prospective boxers and in some cases their parents, can make an informed decision to accept the risks."

The authors do lay out the body of available scientific knowledge of boxing and a large amount of literature from newspapers, magazine, and books in an attempt to provide debate regarding perpetuation of the sport.

There are, however, many problems with the book's format. First, despite their desire to educate fighters, it is extremely unlikely that anyone but a physician or scientist would attempt to read it. Although the contents are comprehensive, the manner in which the information is presented makes it very difficult to focus on issues. Instead, it seems to travel aimlessly through countless journal articles, and quotations from fighters and media reports of matches. And there is often not a clear association between the actual case histories and the medical topic. Secondly, through no fault of the authors, much of the research data is more than 30 years old. It is unfortunate that only a handful of research on boxers has been performed in recent years, and the lack of reasonable funding makes the prospect for future studies unlikely.

On a positive note, the boxing photographs in the book are magnificent and provide a medical history of the sport that has never been done before. This alone would be fascinating to any boxing fan. From a physician's perspective, the chapters dealing with brain injuries including statistics, studies, and pictures of actual boxers' brains are truly insightful.

If the authors ever decide to do another volume, my final recommendation would be to utilize boxing physicians and experts, who could help the authors reorganize the contents to make them more applicable to safety improvement. ■

COME OUT WRITING

Letters may be edited for reasons of space and clarity. Send your comments to Come Out Writing, The Ring, P.O. Box 1148, Fort Washington, PA 19034. Or e-mail letters to comeoutwriting@yahoo.com. E-mailed letters will include the writer's e-mail address unless a city and state of origin is provided.

STUPID STRIPPING

How the heck can the WBC strip a title from someone for not fighting a loser? Let's get this straight: Ricardo Mayorga loses to Cory Spinks and is then knocked out by Felix Trinidad, which somehow makes him the mandatory challenger for WBC super welterweight titleholder Javier Castillejo! And when Castillejo doesn't fight Mayorga, the WBC says Castillejo is no longer titleholder. Please, somebody help. Where's Max Kellerman to spit on them? THE RING belt is the only belt for me. Thanks, guys, for always being there.

HECTOR BARREA JR.
susspirol@yahoo.com

GOODBYE, MIKE

I hope I have just seen the last fight of Mike Tyson's career. Getting beat by Danny Williams was bad enough, but getting beat by Kevin McBride, the great white no-hope, is much worse. I started watching Tyson in the late-1980s when he was at his best knocking out Trevor Berbick, Michael Spinks, and Larry Holmes, and almost decapitating Pinklon Thomas. These are the fights I will remember Iron Mike for. So thanks for the memories, Mike, and all the best for the future.

MATTHEW TAYLOR
Leicester City, England

In the last 20 years, no fighter has brought so much recognition, excitement, or notoriety to boxing as Mike Tyson. I have great appreciation for what Iron Mike has done for the sport I love. When Tyson fights, you actually see newspaper headlines with the word "boxing" in them. This is something no other fighter, even the undisputed champions, can do. America is still interested in Tyson, but to be surprised when he losses is ignorant. Wake up, everybody. Tyson is done. It is time to let his legend fade and spawn a new fighter of the same magnitude.

CORY SOMERS
Peru, IL

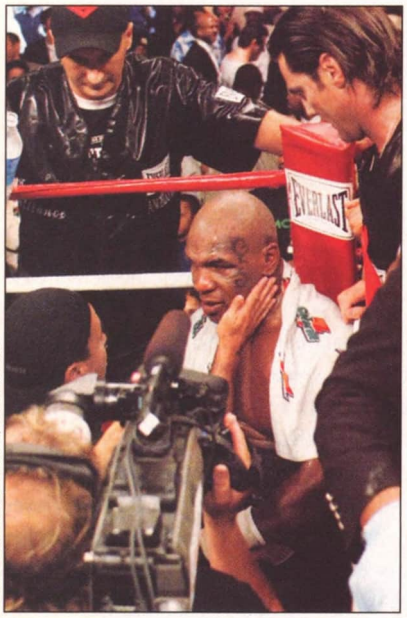


PHOTO BY MITCHELL LAYTON/GETTY IMAGES

A television camera zooms in as trainer Jeff Fenech tries to consol Mike Tyson following his TKO loss to Kevin McBride. Many readers, including Matthew Taylor and Cory Somers, wrote to thank Tyson for his memorable career.

HAPPY ENDING

I thoroughly enjoyed Brian Doogan's RING Update on Buster Douglas in the August 2005 issue of THE RING EXTRA. I always thought Douglas was the "Cinderella Man" reborn and then some. I still get chills every time I see his thrashing of Mike Tyson. Having lived the era when we all thought Tyson was invincible, it is still unbelievable to watch. It's refreshing to read that Buster is doing so well. Not only has he immortalized himself in the ring, but from the looks of things, he is going to do the same outside the ropes as well. It's refreshing to know that good guys can finish first. God bless you, Buster.

JOHNATHAN L. IVERSON
New York, NY

HOORAY FOR HATTON

I hope that Ricky Hatton's fantastic victory over Kostya Tszyu has silenced the doubters not just in America, but also all over the world. Just because Ricky hasn't fought many times in the United States does not mean he's not world-class. And if you think Hatton is good, just wait until Junior "The Hitter" Witter explodes onto the U.S. scene. He's even better than the "Hitman" Hatton!

TOM PODMORE
Redditch, England

COWBOY BUSHWHACKED

I just watched the IBF cruiserweight title bout between "Cowboy" Dale Brown and O'Neill Bell, and the decision left me shaking my head in frustration. Bell was awarded the unanimous decision after getting rocked in round three and soundly outboxed by the counterpunching Canadian. I had Brown ahead by five points at the final bell, as did my roommate and all of the ESPN2 commentators. This was a disgraceful decision that smacked of a home country fighter being given a gift over a visiting boxer. Kudos to the *Friday Night Fight*'s Joe Tessitore and Kevin Kelley for calling it like it was during the postfight interview with the Bell. Shame on judges Richard Green, Robert Hoyle, and Michael Pernick. How they can look themselves in the mirror is beyond me. Their ineptitude cost a fine and honest athlete the money, respect, and future he deserved.

DAVID NEIMAN
Toronto, Ontario

WHAT ABOUT MAX?

I just saw the movie *Cinderella Man* and I thought it was a very good boxing movie. Russell Crowe did a good job of portraying James J. Braddock, but for my money, Max Baer seemed like a more intriguing character. The movie portrayed Baer as a crude, sadistic party animal. Was Max Baer depicted properly, or was he made out to be worse than he really was for dramatic effect? All I know about Baer is that he didn't like to train, had a brother who was a heavyweight contender, and his son played Jethro on *The Beverly Hillbillies*. Can you set the record straight on Max Baer?

Max Baer poses with showgirls Bonnie Blackwell and Roxey Green during rehearsals for a song and dance routine he performed at New York's Paramount Theatre in 1934. Reader Robert DeLuca wrote to find out if the movie* Cinderella Man *accurately portrayed the former heavyweight champ.

ROBERT DeLUCA
Bridgeport, CT

[Editor's note: While Baer was a ladies' man and the sort of guy who enjoyed being the life of the party, he was certainly not "sadistic." In fact, it was after Frankie Campbell died as a result of head injuries he suffered in a 1930 knockout loss to Baer that the future heavyweight champion began to have second thoughts about the consequences of his occupation. After the Campbell tragedy, Baer, a very powerful right-hand puncher, began to clown around more in the ring and seemed far less interested in knocking out opponents. Baer turned pro in 1929 and had his final bout in 1941, leaving an overall record of 71-13 (53). He held the heavyweight title from June 14, 1934, when he stopped Primo Carnera, until June 13, 1935, when he lost the title to Braddock.]

UNFAIR ADVANTAGE

I am a longtime boxing fan who has had enough of fighters gaining so much weight between the weigh-in and fight time that they're two or three divisions heavier. The Miguel Cotto-DeMarcus Corley fight was just the latest example of this ridiculous practice. Cotto gained 17 pounds in one day. That is extremely dangerous and not fair to his opponent. The weigh-in must be on the day of the fight to ensure that these ridiculous weight gains are stopped.

DAVID JOENKS
Santa Clara, CA

SAME OLD HAGLER

I just finished reading your "Hagler-Hearns Revisited" special in THE RING DOUBLE, Volume IV, 2005. It was a very good historical perspective. However, it reminded me of how much I came to dislike Marvin Hagler during that period. He conned Hearns, a great welterweight with an Achilles-chin, into a kamikaze brawl, then gloated and bragged. Later on, when Leonard didn't fall for his game and instead made him look like a buffoon, Hagler whined to anyone who would listen. He is apparently still whining to this day. If Hagler wanted recognition, glory, or celebrity, he should have accepted Michael Spinks' challenge and moved up and fought him instead of fighting welterweights.

MICHEAL ALGERNON
New York, NY

AWE-INSPIRING EXPERIENCE

As I sit here writing this, I am still humbled and in awe at the spectacle of Diego Corrales-Jose Luis Castillo fight. It was Hearns Hagler-Hearns, Foremen-Lyle, and Chavez-Taylor combined. But I saw not one mention of this fight in my local paper, and if I missed it I apologize, but I doubt ESPN's *SportsCenter* gave it much notice either. No one got his ear bitten off, nor did a guy flying a giant fan fall into the ring, so there was no reason to report on it, right? Maybe it would be better if boxing never became mainstream again. This way we can all be part of a small fraternity that knows the real score.

JAMES W. WAYLAND
jameswwayland@aol.com ■

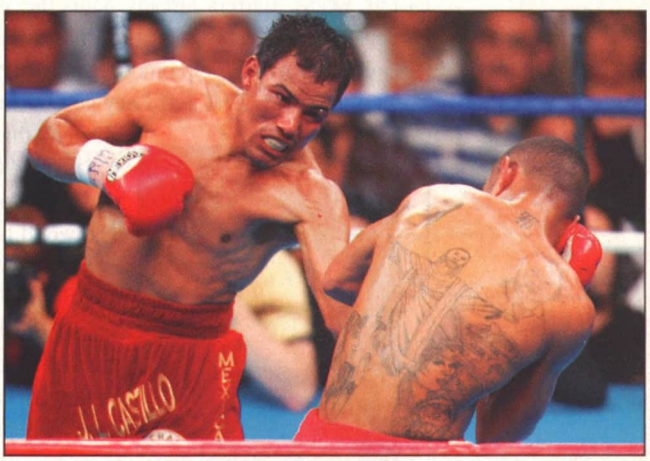


PHOTO BY NICK LAHAM/GETTY IMAGES

Castillo bores in on Corrales during their epic battle for the lightweight championship. Reader James W. Wayland was thrilled by the fight, but also disappointed that it received virtually no mainstream media coverage.

LOOKING AHEAD

By Joe Santoliquito

CORRALES AND CASTILLO AT IT AGAIN

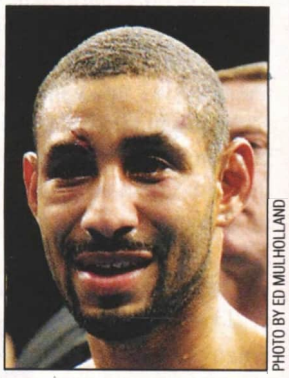


PHOTO BY ED MULHOLLAND

Corrales is ready for another war

The epic lightweight war between **Diego Corrales** and **Jose Luis Castillo** caught so many fans in such a visceral way, the fight has passed to almost legendary status since it took place in May. Now it's time for the hard part: a rematch that comes close to the first incarnation.

It looks as if Corrales and Castillo will get that chance on either October 8 or October 15, in Las Vegas again, according to Showtime Executive Producer Jay Larkin and Gary Shaw, Corrales' promoter. The fight will be televised on Showtime Pay-Per-View.

"It's as good as done," Larkin said. "You couldn't put a better fight than that on, and my only concern is equaling a fight that's become a legend. If it's anything like the first fight, and Castillo wins, you set up a rubber match. But as a fan, you worry about the intensity of the first fight. Can these guys do it again? They both apparently seem to be in good shape right now. I was bruised just from watching them the first time."

In late-June, Shaw and Top Rank head Bob Arum met with Larkin at the Showtime offices in New York City to hammer out the details of the rematch.

"Both fighters want to do it, and it's definitely a fight the public wants to see again," Shaw said. "There's no doubt, it'll be a replay of the first fight."

Asked if Corrales and Castillo could endure another all-out battle, Shaw assured that at least Corrales' health was okay after "Chico" came off the canvas to score a 10-round stoppage of Castillo to win the world lightweight title.

"I always worry about the health of my fighters, and when Diego and I went to England after the Castillo fight, I watched for everything, slurred speech and things like that," Shaw said. "But this is a fight that if you saw it the first time, you want to see again. If you missed it, you have to see it. There's a guarantee these guys will put on the same fight as they did the first time."

LISTEN UP

Looks like **Marco Antonio Barrera**, THE RING'S number-one rated junior lightweight, will get a chance at claiming another belt at 130, when he faces IBF junior lightweight titlist **Robbie Peden** on September 17. Two sites were possibilities as of press time for this issue, the Staples Center in Los Angeles and the MGM Grand in Las Vegas. Barrera already holds the WBC super featherweight strap after defeating **Erik Morales**. That September 17 date was originally earmarked for **Oscar De La Hoya**'s return, but it appears now that "The Golden Boy," whose promotional company happens to represent Barrera, said he will not get back into the ring until next year. ... If **Jeff Lacy** gets by **Robin Reid** on August 6, Shaw and Larkin said there was "a 95 percent chance" that "Left Hook" Lacy will travel to Cardiff, Wales, to take on **Joe Calzaghe**. "Calzaghe won't have to look for Jeff Lacy, we'll come to him," Shaw said ... **Vitali Klitschko** reports that he is completely healed from back surgery. The world heavyweight champion started jogging in June and began working out in July for a title defense on September 17 at a site to be determined. Here's the big question: Whom will he be fighting? **Hasim Rahman** was scheduled to fight **Monte Barrett** on August 13, at the United Center in Chicago. Without those two, that left a robust group that includes WBC-ranked **Sinan Samil Sam**, **Samuel Peter**, **DaVarryl Williamson**, and **Oleg Maskaev**. Take out Peter, and that's some ugly pickings. In fact, if it's anyone but Peter (which is unlikely) who really cares? ... **Rocky Juarez-In Jin Chi**, a fight originally slated for July 15, in Temecula, California, has been pushed back to August 20, in Chicago, on the undercard of **Fernando Vargas-Javier Castillo**. ■

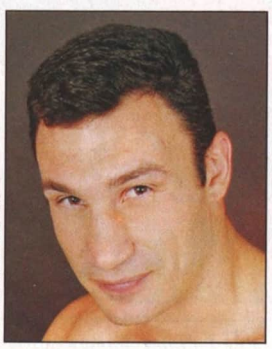


PHOTO BY JAN SANDERS

Klitschko is due to return in September

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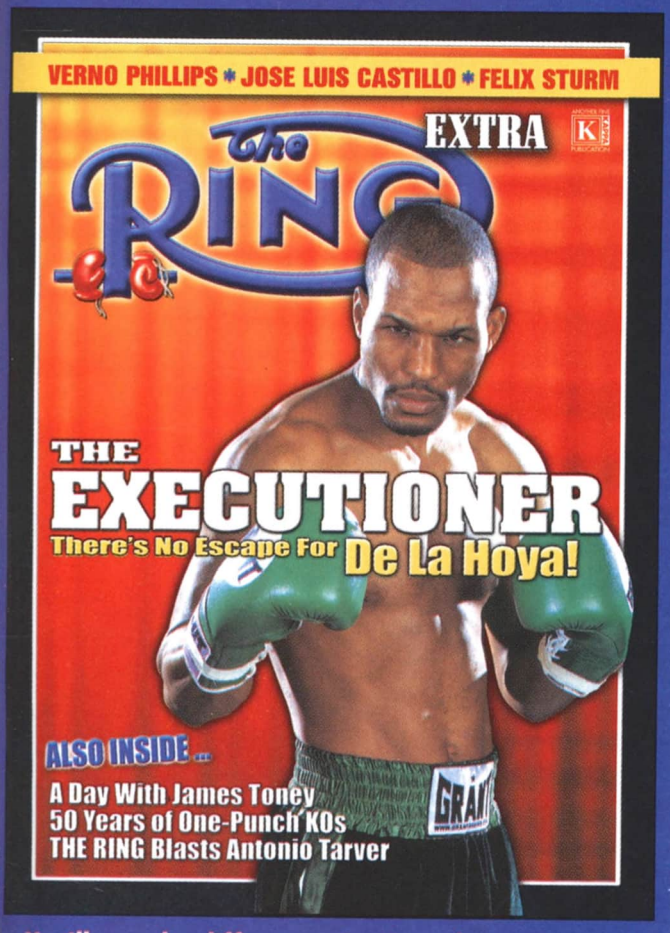

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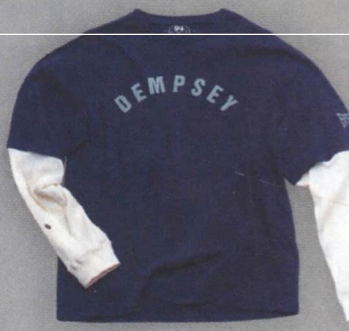

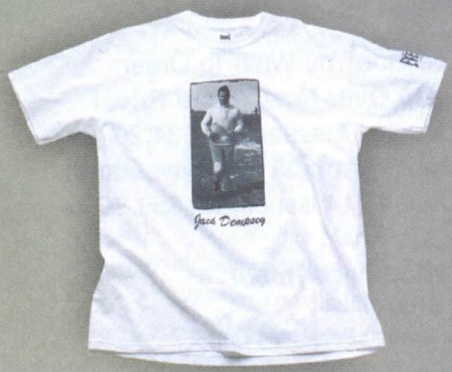

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